

MORE TALES FROM TOLSTOI

JARROLD & SONS' SHILLING NOVELS.

Bound in red cloth, gilt back, with
pictorial wrapper.

PRICE 1/- net each.

1. WE THREE & TRODDLES.
R. Andom.
2. THE MYSTERY OF A HAN-
SOM CAB. Fe. gus Hume.
3. THE GREEN BOOK.
Maurus Jókai.
4. GILES'S TRIP TO LONDON.
5. VALENTINE. Curtis Yorke.
6. 'MIDST THE WILD CAR-
PATHIANS. Maurus Jókai.
7. THE LION OF JANINA.
Maurus Jókai.
8. TRODDLES & US. R. Andom.

Other titles in preparation.

JARROLD'S EMPIRE LIBRARY.

Bound in handsome cloth gilt,
pictorial wrapper.

PRICE 1/- net each.

1. BLACK BEAUTY. Anna Sewell.
2. THE ADVENTURES OF A
SIBERIAN CUB. A. Slivitski.
3. TALES FROM TOLSTOI,
Leo Tolstoi.
4. BEAUTIFUL JOE.
Marshall Saunders.
5. MORE TALES FROM TOLSTOI.
Leo Tolstoi.
6. SABLE & WHITE.
Gordon Stables.

Other titles in preparation.

JARROLD & SONS,
16 & 17 Warwick Lane, London, E.C.

MORE TALES FROM TOLSTOI

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN, WITH BIOGRAPHY
OF THE AUTHOR, BY

R. NISBET BAIN



LONDON
JARROLD & SONS, 10 & 11, WARWICK LANE, E.C.
1828

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

542 3-2-95

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
BIOGRAPHY	7
I. THE SNOWSTORM	47
II. THE CAPTIVE IN THE CAUCASUS	95
III. HATRED IS SWEET, BUT GOD IS STRONG	138
IV. ELIAS	142
V. THE TWO BROTHERS AND THE GOLD	150
VI. THE CHILDREN WISER THAN THE ELDERS	154
VII. THE DEATH OF IVAN IL'ICH	158
VIII. THE PENITENT SINNER	249
IX. THREE DEATHS	253
X. THE STORY OF IVAN THE FOOL	275

BIOGRAPHY.

LEV NIKOLAIVICH TOLSTOI, was born on September 9th, 1828, at his father's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, in the Government of Tula. His family is said to have been of German descent, originally bearing the somewhat plebeian name of Dick,* which they changed for its Russian equivalent *Tolsty*, when they migrated to Muscovy at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The first eminent member of the stock was Peter Andrievich (1645-1727), one of Peter the Great's most famous "fledgelings," renowned for his energy, versatility, and diplomatic *finesse*, whom his master richly endowed and raised to countly rank. Yet Peter himself seems always to have stood on his guard against him. "Tolstoi," he is reported to have said, "is an able and intelligent man; but it is just as well, when you have anything to do with him, to have a good big stone handy, that you may be able to break his teeth in case it should suddenly occur to him to bite you." It was this sinister sleuth-hound who hunted down the unfortunate Tsarevich Alexis in his Neapolitan retreat, and thus drew down upon himself the well-merited hatred of the Russian people,

* Stout.

Biography

who regarded the murdered Prince as a martyr for orthodoxy. Another ancestor, Peter Aleksandrevich (1769-1844), was a notable warrior, who, after fighting the Poles and Turks under Suvorov and Napoléon under Bennigsen, crushed the Polish revolt of 1831, and quitted the army with the rank of a Field-Marshal. The Tolstois, though not belonging to the ancient Muscovite Boyar families themselves, have always held their heads high among the modern Russian aristocracy, and it used to be the boast of the family that not a single member of it had ever contracted a *mésalliance*. Tolstoi's own mother was a Princess Volkhonskaya, his paternal grandmother was a Princess Gorchakova, his maternal grandmother was a Princess Trubetskoya, all three of them lineal descendants of Rurik, the antipatriarch of the Muscovite Tsars. Tolstoi himself had a strong outward resemblance to his grandfather, Prince Nicholas Volkhonsky (the prototype of Bolkonsky in "War and Peace"), though of a somewhat rougher build. Thus for two centuries the bluest of blood has coursed through the veins of the Tolstois, and though the present owner of Yasnaya Polyana has been in the habit of going about in peasant's garb, the portraits adorning the walls of the mansion represent, with scarcely an exception, counts, princes, and privy-counsellors, all bedizened with stars and ribbons.

Tolstoi's father, Count Nikolai Ilich, was described by those who knew him as a stately, fascinating personage. As Lieut.-Colonel in the Pavlopadsky Regiment he had served with distinction throughout the epoch-making campaign of 1812-1813. Nikolai

Tolstoi inherited from his father an almost bankrupt estate, and as, after satisfying his father's creditors to the uttermost farthing, he found it impossible to subsist on his scanty pay, he resorted to the time-honoured family practice of marrying a heiress, a lady of few personal charms but great wealth, considerably older than himself, Maria Ivanovna Volkhonskaya. Nevertheless this *mariage de convenance* proved an extremely happy though not a very lasting union, Tolstoi losing his mother when he was only three years of age (she died in 1831) and his father six years later. If, as is commonly supposed, Tolstoi's mother was the original of the Princess Maria in "War and Peace," she must, young as he was at the time of her death, have made a deep impression upon him. He describes her as of a tender, plaintive, mystical nature, of such finely woven texture as scarce to seem to belong to this world, one of those heroines of self-sacrifice who live not for themselves and "who do not so much die as fly to Heaven." One precious gift she possessed, moreover, which her son certainly inherited from her, the gift of inventing tales and stories which held her hearers spellbound. It is said that when she was in a ballroom she quickly gathered round her a bevy of curious damsels who forgot their partners and everything else as they listened spellbound to the stories of the Princess Volkhonskaya.

Tolstoi's earliest reminiscences have thus been recorded by himself in a work published some years ago. Perhaps no other great writer's memory has ever been able to travel so far back.

Biography

"These are my first recollections (which I cannot arrange in their proper sequence, not knowing which come first and which later, of some I cannot even say whether they were seen asleep or awake). Here, at any rate, they are :—I was tied up in a bundle, I wanted to stretch out my arms and I couldn't do it, and I cried and wept and my crying was disagreeable to myself, yet I couldn't leave off. Someone or other seemed to be bending over me. I don't remember who. And all this was happening in a semi-gloom. But I remember there were two persons present, and my crying had the same effect upon them; they were troubled by my crying, but they did not take me out of my bandages as I wanted them to do, and I cried all the louder. My being tied up seemed to them to be a necessary thing, whereas I knew that it was not necessary, and I wanted to prove it to them, and I spent myself in crying, and this crying was disagreeable to myself but unrestrainable. I felt the injustice and cruelty—not of people, for they had compassion on me, but of fate, and I felt pity for myself. I know not and never could make out how exactly it was, that is to say, whether they had swathed me so when I was a suckling and I stretched out my arms, or whether they had swathed me when I was years older in order that I might not scratch myself. Whether, as is often the case in dreams, I concentrated many impressions in this one recollection I cannot say, but it is certain that this was my first and strongest impression of life. And what I remember about it most is not my crying, or my

suffering, but the complicity, the contrariety of the impression. I wanted liberty, that liberty interfered with nobody, and I who wanted strength was weak while the others were strong.

“My second impression is a joyous one. I am sitting in a trough and surrounded by the novel and unpleasant odour of some substance or other with which my little body comes in contact. Possibly it was bran, and possibly this bran was in the water and the trough, but the novelty of the impression of the bran awoke my faculties, and for the first time I observed, and loved my little body with its ribs visible on its trunk, and the smooth dark trough and the bare arms of my nurse, and the warm, steamy, terrifying water and the sound of it, and, in particular, the sensation of the wetness of the smooth sides of the trough when I drew my tiny hands along it.

“It is strange and terrible to reflect that, from my birth to my third year, at the very time when I was being nourished at the breast, taken from the breast—at the very time when I was beginning to crawl, to walk, to speak—it is strange, I say, that, search my memory as I will, I can find therein no impressions whatever save these two.

“What was the beginning? When did I begin to live? . . . Did I not live indeed when I learnt to see, to hear, to speak, when I slept, sucked the breast and kissed the breast, and laughed and delighted my mother? I lived and lived gloriously! Did not I then acquire everything whereby I live now?—and did I not acquire so much so quickly, that in all the remainder of my life I have not acquired a

Biography

hundredth part of what I acquired then? From a child of five to me, as I am now, is but a step. From a new-born child to a child of five the distance is terrific. . . .

"The recollections which follow refer only to my fourth and fifth years, but even of these there are but few, and not one of them refers to life outside the walls of the house. Nature till my fifth year did not exist for me. All that I recollect occurs in my little bed and in my bedroom. . . . People must have let me play with flowers, with leaves; they must needs have shielded me from the sun; but till my fifth or sixth year I have not a single recollection of what we call nature. Possibly one has to get away from her in order to see her, and I was nature.

"The next thing after my trough that I recollect is the recollection of Ereameevna. 'Ereameevna' was the word with which they used to frighten us children. No doubt they frightened us long before this, but my recollection of it is as follows: I am in my little bed, and very happy and comfortable, as I always was, and I should not have remembered anything about it, if the nurse or someone else who then made part of my life, had not said something or other in a voice new to me and went away, and at once a feeling of terror was added to the feeling of comfort. And I recollect that I was not alone, but someone else was there just like me. (This no doubt was my sister Mashenka, who was a year younger than myself, for our beds were in the same little room.) And I recollect there was a little curtain to my bed, and my sister and I were tremulously delighted at the

extraordinary thing that was befalling us, and I kept on hiding my head in my pillow and glancing at the door from which I was expecting something novel and pleasant to emerge. And we laughed and hid our faces and waited. And behold! someone appeared in a gown and high cap such as I had never seen before, yet I recognised it to be the same person who was always with me (my nurse or my aunt, which I know not), and this someone spoke in a gruff voice, which I recognised, something terrible about naughty children and about Ereemeevna. I trembled with fear and joy, I was terrified and yet delighted in my terror, and I wanted the someone who was frightening me not to know that I recognised her. We were silent, and after that we began to whisper together—our purpose was to conjure up Ereemeevna again.

“I have another recollection similar to that of Ereemeevna, and possibly later in time, because it is much clearer, although it has always remained unintelligible to me. In this recollection the principal part is played by a German called Theodor Ivanovich, our tutor, yet I know for certain that I was not under his control at the time, so this must have taken place before my fifth year. And this was my first impression of Theodor Ivanovich. And it was of so early occurrence that I still recollected nobody at that time, neither my brothers, nor my father. If I have any recollection at all of any particular person, it is only of my sister, and I only recollect her because she shared with me my terror of Ereemeevna. Connected with this recollection is

Biography

my first consciousness of the fact that our house had an upper storey. How I got up there, whether I went there myself, or whether someone carried me, I don't recollect at all. I only recollect that there were a good many of us there, and we were all dancing, holding each other's hands, and there were some strange women amongst us (I have a dim recollection that they were washerwomen), and we all began to leap and caper, and Theodor Ivanovich also leaped, lifting his feet too high and too noisily and boisterously, and the same instant I felt that this was not right but excessive, and I looked at him, and meseems I began to cry, and the whole thing came to an end.

"That is all I can recollect up to my fifth year. I remember nothing of my nurse, my aunts, my brothers, my sisters, my father, my rooms, and my games. My recollections grow more distinct from the time when they brought me downstairs to Theodor Ivanovich and to the older children.

"On being taken downstairs to Theodor Ivanovich and the children, I experienced for the first time, and consequently more strongly than at any subsequent period, the feeling which we call the sense of duty, the feeling of the cross which everyone is called upon to bear. It was painful to me to forsake what I had been accustomed to (accustomed to from eternity, as it then seemed to me); it was painful, poetically painful, to part not only from people, from my sister, my aunt, but also from my little bed with the curtains, from my little pillow, and frightful to me was the new life on which I was entering

I tried to find pleasure in the new life which stood before me; I tried to believe in the endearing words with which Theodor Ivanovich enticed me to him; I tried not to perceive the contempt with which the other children received me, because I was smaller than they; I tried to think that it was a shame for a big boy to go on living with little girls, and there was no good at all in the life upstairs with my nurse; but at heart I was frightfully miserable, and I knew that I had lost beyond recall innocence and happiness, and only the feeling of my own dignity, the consciousness that I was doing my duty, sustained me.

"Many times, subsequently, in the course of my life it has been my lot to experience such moments at the turning-points of life as I turned into fresh paths. I have experienced a silent misery at irreparable losses. Whatever they may have said to me about going down to the other children, the chief thing I remember is the *khalat**, with the strap sewn on to the back, which they put on me so as to separate me for ever from the life upstairs, and then for the first time I observed not all those with whom I had lived upstairs hitherto, but the chief person with whom I lived and whom I did not remember before. This was my aunt, T. A. I remember her as a smallish, stout, dark-haired, kind, fresh, compassionate person. She dressed me in my *khalat*, fitted it round me, fastened my belt, and kissed me, and I saw that she felt the same thing as I did; she felt that it was sad, terribly sad, but

* A long jacket.

Biography

necessary. I began to feel for the first time that life was not a game, but a serious affair”*

Shortly before the death of Tolstoi's father, the whole family, consisting of four boys and one little girl, removed to Moscow in order that the eldest son, Nicholas, might prepare for the University, but the sudden death of Count Tolstoi, almost immediately afterwards, left the family in such straitened circumstances that they were obliged to return at once to Yasnaya Polyana, where the children were taught German by a German governess and Russian language and literature by a poor native seminarist. According to his Aunt Polina Yushkovaya, who was now responsible for his bringing up, little Lev had a petulant temper but an excellent heart, and was given to playing pranks of a somewhat disconcerting character. Between his seventh and eighth year he was possessed by the strange idea that he could fly if only he planted himself firmly on the soles of his feet, at the same time clasping his knees tightly enough, and he actually attempted to carry his theory into practice by leaping in this peculiar posture from one of the top windows of the house, with the inevitable result of a broken leg. We also have a very full and interesting description of his later childhood in his first work, “*Dyetsvo*” (“*Childhood*”), published in a newspaper, *Sovremennik*, in 1852, from which it is obvious that from a very early age he was an acute and impressionable observer. And here it may be remarked that nearly all Tolstoi's works are to a large extent autobiographical documents.

* “*Poslyednie Razskazui i Stat'i*,”—Berlin, 1894.

If Tolstoi's mother had some of the characteristics of a saint, as much cannot be said of his aunt and guardian, Polina Yushkovaya. She appears, from all accounts, to have been a good-natured, worldly minded woman, very proud of her great connexions, and considering wealth and position as the sole means to happiness. One of her favourite maxims was, nothing licks a young man into shape so much as a carefully contrived liaison with a woman *comme il faut*. Nor were matters made much better when, in the early forties, young Tolstoi went to Kazan to complete his education. It was usual in those days for the Russian youths to go direct to the University from their homes, where the teaching they got was, at best, very imperfect and perfunctory, instead of, as now, using the Gymnasium as a stepping-stone to the University. Moreover, the University curriculum of the period was not of a very superior character. Those were the iron days of Nicholas I., when an artfully organized system of repression dominated all things—education included. Every lecture and every examination-paper was carefully censured beforehand, and "even to Archbishops," as the Tsar himself expressed it, "the whole book could not possibly be given." Add to this that the University of Kazan itself was very much below the level of the Universities of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The life of the students at the old Volgan city is described by contemporaries as extremely stormy and scandalous. Princely students kept whole streets in a state of siege for weeks together by incessantly discharging

Biography

air-guns from their garret-windows at all passers-by, and most of the aristocratic students formed exclusive little *coteries* among themselves which were so engrossed with really important matters like balls, picnics, dramatic entertainments, and very often less reputable forms of amusement, that they had very little time left for mere study. Moreover, this easy, pleasant state of existence came all the easier because Kazan, in those days, was the regular place of resort in the summer-time for the county families of the whole country side, who flocked thither to educate their sons and find husbands for their grown-up daughters. The higher classes, all more or less closely connected, gloried in a large patriarchal hospitality. A young bachelor student of good family in those days need never keep his own table. Twenty or thirty houses were open to him daily without special invitation, he had only to pick and choose. A student, when once in the full swing of the thing, could rarely get to bed till five o'clock in the morning, and rarely rose till after twelve o'clock at noon. Tolstoi, in the character of "Nikolinka Irtenev," has given us a vivid piece of self-portraiture as he was at Kazan. A morbid sensitiveness, a pitiful lack of moral and mental equilibrium, a consuming pride, and a disgust at his own privileged position which points to a latent reserve of nobility, is legible in every line of this description. His plainness was evidently one of his sorest troubles. "I was bashful by nature," he tells us through the mouth of his hero, "but my bashfulness grew with the growing consciousness of my ugliness, . . . and like

the fox who made believe that the grapes were sour, I affected to despise all the gratifications attainable by an agreeable exterior, and tried with all the strength of my mind and imagination to find delight in a haughty isolation." The unsatisfying futility of the butterfly-life he led filled him with a savage impatience. He could quite understand, he tells us, the commission of the greatest crimes, not from any desire to injure but from sheer curiosity to see what would happen, from the sheer necessity of doing something. "There are moments," he says, "when the future presents itself to our mind's eye in such dark colours that we fear to face it with the eye of reason, and try to persuade ourselves that there will be no Future and that there has been no Past. At such moments I can well understand a youth lighting a fire beneath the very house where his parents, his brothers and sisters, whom he tenderly loves, are sleeping, aye, and doing it without the least fear or hesitation and even with a smile upon his face." He was firmly convinced at this time that everyone, from his grandmother to his coachman, hated him and delighted in his sufferings, and he took a melancholy pleasure in reflecting that this was to be his destined fate. Yet at this very time he was being petted and fêted by all his acquaintances, and allowed to have his own way in everything. The house of his Aunt Yushkovaya was the most aristocratic in Kazan, and young Tolstoi took care to frequent none but the best company, absolutely ignoring the existence of his poorer brethren in grey homespun. His habitual pose was truculent and defiant, his face contemptuous,

Biography

and he made it a rule never to salute any of his fellow students who regarded him as a superior being simply because he wore a magnificent mantle trimmed with beaver and had a horse and a coachman at his disposal. Tolstoi himself divided the whole world into two classes: those who were *comme il faut* and those who were *comme il ne faut pas*. The characteristics of the *comme il faut* people were a correct pronunciation of French, well-kept nails, an aptitude for dancing and bowing elegantly, and above all an habitual expression of well-bred contemptuous *ennui*. The *comme il ne faut pas* people, who possessed none of these saving virtues, he heartily despised, while any person unfortunate enough to speak bad French instantly kindled within him a feeling of hatred. The moral tone of the distinguished circle in which he moved was low indeed. Looking back upon this melancholy period of his life at a later day he remarks (in his "Ispovyed" or Confession), that whenever he tried to be morally good he encountered contempt and laughter, but whenever he gave himself up to pleasant vices he was applauded and encouraged. His good aunt, whom he describes as "the purest of women," frequently told him that she desired nothing so much for him as a liaison with a married lady, and it was the dearest wish of her heart that he should become the Emperor's adjutant, wed a rich girl, and have lots of slaves. Most of his brothers, according to Professor Zagoskin, showed no sign of moral restraint (especially Sergius, who subsequently ran away with a gipsy), with the exception of Demetrius, a mystical ascetic, who went to the opposite

extreme, spent half his time on his knees, and could only be persuaded to go to a ball when the biblical example of King David, dancing before the Ark, was urged upon him. As for Lev Tolstoi himself, religion had so little weight with him at this time that when a casual companion lightly remarked that praying was both unnecessary and ridiculous, he cast aside the habit with as little concern as if he were simply "brushing a piece of fluff off his coat-sleeve." Under these circumstances it is scarcely surprising to learn that he learnt but little of value at Kazan. History he already despised as "a tissue of legends and trifles generally unnecessary and often immoral." The juridical Faculty he despised because all its professors were Germans. Finally, he attached himself to the Faculty of Oriental Tongues, one of the special features of the University of Kazan, but despite the extra aid of private instruction, was duly plucked at his examination. Finally, in 1847, he quitted Kazan and returned to the family estate at Yasnaya Polyana, where he resided for the next four years.

Even now young Tolstoi was painfully impressed by the wretched condition of the Russian muzhik, and anxious to ameliorate his lot. "Was it not my sacred and obvious duty," he cries,* "to have a care for these 700 men, for whom I was responsible to God?" His earlier efforts in this direction, however, were defeated by the invincible laziness of the peasants and his own inexperience. It was about this time, moreover, that

* Speaking through the mouth of Prince Nekhlyudov, in "Utro Pomyeshchika," who is Tolstoi himself.

Biography

his humanitarian theories received a powerful impetus from a diligent study of Rousseau.

In 1851 Tolstoi received fresh impressions from a visit to the Caucasus with his brother Nicholas. After sailing down the Volga through the country of the Calmucks, who then were still fire-worshippers, they settled down on the left bank of the Terek, not far from Kizylar, in the midst of a simple, unaffected people, spending most of their time in shooting pheasants, hunting wild boars, and wandering through fen and forest. The beauty and variety of the Caucasian scenery, where, in a few hours, one passes from the realm of eagles and snow-storms to emerald-green valleys where the dense oak forests are thick with azaleas and laurels, where myrtles and cypresses grow in the open air, and mountain ranges, dominated by the snowy caps of Elbrus and Kazbek, form an impressive background, powerfully affected young Tolstoi. Nor was he without strange adventures and curious experiences. On one occasion he narrowly escaped capture at the hands of the savage mountaineers whilst on an excursion five miles from the nearest Russian outpost, and had to ride for his life. On another occasion he lost so heavily at cards that despairing of ever being able to pay his debts he resorted, in a sudden access of religious fervour, to the desperate expedient of prayer, and while still on his knees was interrupted by the arrival of an unexpected messenger from a friend with a gift of money. It is to this residence in the Caucasus that we owe one of the most brilliant and characteristic of Tolstoi's earlier works: "Kavkazsky Plyennik" ("The Captive in

the Caucasus"), a later adaptation of which by Tolstoi himself forms No. 2 in the present collection.

At this period of his life Tolstoi was an enthusiastic hunter and full of martial fervour. He was easily persuaded to join the artillery, had several brushes with the enemy, and lived modestly on his pay of five roubles (ten shillings) a month, till he had paid off all his card debts. He passionately desired at this time to win the Cross of St. George for valour (which is said to have been withheld from him, though well merited, by the enmity of his superior officer), and on the outbreak of the Crimean War was attached to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Count Gorchakov, determined at all hazards to win the laurels denied to him in the Caucasus. Throughout the war he distinguished himself, both as an officer and a soldier, by the most irreproachable valour, realising his own ideal* of true courage by doing his duty on every occasion without vain glory or desperation, and took an active part in the disastrous battle of the Black River. There can be little doubt that the rude but salutary lessons of active warfare, teaching as it does to those who will learn the lesson, the urgent necessity of complete self-restraint and self-surrender, had a purifying, ennobling influence on Tolstoi's character. His comrades, in general, seem to have adored him. "Tolstoi," says one of them, "with his tales and couplets, enlivened us all. In the fullest sense of the word he was the soul of our party. When he was with us, time seemed to fly, and our merriment

* As subsequently presented by Capt. Khlopov in "Nabyeg," and by Timokhin in "Voyna i Mir."

Biography

was endless ; but when he was away all our noses hung down dismally enough." The couplets he composed on the occasion of the battle of August 4th were sung by the whole army ; but his hopes of obtaining a field-adjutancy were dashed in consequence of some bitterly sarcastic verses on his official chiefs which he could not resist writing, and which when once written circulated in MS. from hand to hand. It was now, too, that he drafted the first sketch of his famous "Sevastopolskie Razskazui" ("Sebastopol Tales"), which, even in its rough form, drew tears from the Empress Alexandra, and induced Tsar Nicholas himself to remark that "the life of this young author must be looked after," and to order that he should be transferred to a less dangerous position.

At the end of 1855, on his return to St. Petersburg, the young and titled "hero of Sebastopol" found all the best houses open to him, while "The Sebastopol Tales" gave him the *entrée* to the leading literary circles. His earlier works, "Dyetsvo" ("Childhood"), first published in 1852 in the *Sovremennik*, where it was speedily followed by "Utro Pomyeshchika" and "Otrochestvo" ("Boyhood"), though highly spoken of by Nekrasov and other connoisseurs, do not seem to have attracted general attention. Now, however, he was regarded as one of the leading spirits of that new era of emancipation and enlightenment which coincided with the accession of the Tsar-Liberator, Alexander II. But Tolstoi was never able to thrive in literary circles. This was due not so much to his super-sensitiveness and natural reserve as to an intimate conviction, which he invariably

expressed with the utmost frankness, that the cult of art and literature was mostly affectation and mere phrasing. He never would believe in the regenerating influence of mere culture. This was the secret of his quarrel with his great contemporary, Turgenev, whose cosmopolitanism, Anglomania, and "gentlemanly way of regarding literature and progress generally," absolutely revolted him. The Russian author, Fet', who met Tolstoi one evening at Nekrasov's, observed in him, at the very first instant, "an involuntary opposition to everything generally accepted in the department of criticism." In other words, young Tolstoi refused to believe in the dawn of a new era of progress in which poets and artists were to be the priests of culture, and show the people a new and better way. Such optimistic theories struck him as mere nostrums. But listen to his own account of the matter. "I began to doubt the truth of the theory because the priests of this new religion did not agree among themselves. I found that we had not made up our minds on the essential point, what is good and what is evil, so that we, the sole teachers of truth, attacked and contradicted one another like so many Bedlamites." For Tolstoi even now was against every sort of compromise. He aimed at nothing short of absolute perfection and at perfection alone. At the same time the desire to excel everyone in everything was strong within him. Even physically it was his ambition to be stronger and more dexterous than his fellows, and he began a course of gymnastic exercises which even in his old age he was not altogether to abandon. We are told that on his return to Yasnaya

Biography

Polyana his steward coming to him in the morning for orders would frequently find his master hanging in flannels, head downwards, on a trapeze, in which position he would discuss the best modes of sowing and threshing, the steward accompanying his young master round and round the room as he turned somersaults without interrupting the conversation. Forty-five years later the habitual filling of a huge water-butt for domestic purposes was to be to him what the hewing down of trees used to be to Mr. Gladstone.

It was in 1856 that Tolstoi quitted the capital for the repose and seclusion of Yasnaya Polyana, dividing his time between agricultural pursuits (ploughing and sowing his own fields and labouring hard to better the condition of his serfs) and literature. To this period belong the novels and romances, "Yunost" ("Youth"), "Vstryecha v Otryadye" ("The Encounter in the Battalion"), "Metel'" ("The Snowstorm"), No. 1 of the present collection, "Zapiski Markera" ("The Memories of a Marker"), and "Dva Husara" ("Two Hussars").

In 1857 Tolstoi went abroad for the first time, and was away for two years visiting Germany, in which he was very much interested, and France. At Paris he again encountered Turgenev, but the meeting was anything but felicitous. Writing to a friend as to his experiences on this occasion, Turgenev remarks: "I cannot get on with Tolstoi anyhow, our views are so utterly different." Twelve months later Tolstoi went abroad again, but between his first and second foreign tour occurred what he always regarded as the

tragedy of his life—the death of his elder brother Nicholas, to whom he was devotedly attached, and who is said to have been the one really intimate friend, except his wife, he ever possessed. Turgenev describes the elder Tolstoi as “a talented talker and story-teller, who always lived by himself either in the country or in quite impossible quarters at Moscow, sharing everything with the poor.” The effect of this bereavement upon Lev was crushing. “Nothing in all my life,” he tells us, “made such an impression upon me. Why worry and suffer any more, I thought to myself, when nought remains of such a one as Nikolai Nikolaevich?” From henceforth the shadow of death falls across his finest pages, and he is possessed by a constantly deepening feeling of the futility of life and the emptiness of the best that it can offer. Even art lost its charm for him. “Art is a lie, and I cannot love a lie however beautiful,” is his summing up of the whole matter. It was in this morbidly gloomy frame of mind that he wrote “Lucerne” and “Albert,” surely the most pessimistic productions of modern fiction.

Tolstoi's second Continental tour was a voyage of instruction. His alert, receptive, and thorough-going nature laid all branches of foreign learning under contribution. First he visited Berlin to attend the lectures of Droysen and Du Bois Raymond, and study the Prussian penal system, being a frequent visitor at the Moabit Prison, where the solitary confinement system chiefly occupied his attention. He also carefully investigated the various trade unions founded by Schulze-Delitsch, and made the acquaintance of

Biography

the celebrated pedagogue Diesterweg, who struck him as somewhat "hard and dry." Thence he proceeded to Dresden, where he diligently inspected all the principal schools, and paid a sudden and alarming visit on Auerbach, who happened at that time to be his favourite author. Tolstoi abruptly introduced himself as Eugen Bauman, one of Auerbach's characters; but the author of the "Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten," was more frightened than flattered by the unlooked-for inroad of the grim, bizarre-looking young Muscovite, and even Tolstoi's compliment, "Your books have made me think seriously of many things," did not immediately reassure him. At first Auerbach seems to have taken him for a peasant from some remote village who had come either to abuse or to blackmail him for defamation of character. Passing from Dresden to Kissingen, Tolstoi made the acquaintance of Froebel, and then travelling slowly through Switzerland, Italy, and France, proceeded via Brussels to London. It was during this period that he wrote "Tri Smerti" ("Three Deaths"), the last story in the present collection, "Semeinoe Schasti" ("Family Luck"), and "Polikushka."

Tolstoi returned from his second visit to the West full of educational ideas, which he instantly proceeded to put into practice. He began to publish a pedagogic journal, entitled *Yasnaya Polyana*, from the name of his estate, and started a school for the children of his peasantry—the first free school that ever existed in Russia, which was absolutely unique of its kind. Tolstoi adopted the two-fold principle

that "all constraint is dangerous and argues want of proper method," and that "teachers ought to consult not their own convenience but the convenience of their pupils." Accordingly his pupils were allowed practically to do as they liked. They could come and go at will, might sit on chairs, huddle into corners, or stand at the window with their backs to their teachers, as the mood took them, and no discipline of any sort was countenanced. To interest the pupils while they taught them was to be the sole aim of their schoolmasters. This school created some little sensation in its day. French savants and experts raised their hands to Heaven in amazement, and professed they could not understand how order could be evolved from the midst of anarchy; and when the school payed their superior insight the bad compliment of actually succeeding, they could only explain the marvel by emphasizing the difference of temperament between lively French children and the more phlegmatic Slavs. In Russia itself some of the higher officials were uncomfortably agitated by Tolstoi's revolutionary pedagogic methods. The Minister of the Interior, an inveterate adherent of the old non-progressive school, complained to his colleague, the Minister of Education (October 14th, 1862), that, in his opinion, the school of Yasnaya Polyana, and the journal of the same name, threatened to undermine the very foundations of religion and morality, especially as the director and editor was "endowed with a remarkable, I may even say, attractive literary style." Moreover, laments the much perturbed official, Count Tolstoi's convictions

Biography

are so evidently sincere as to place his motives above suspicion, so that there is absolutely no getting at him. And yet opinions so eccentric were bound to mislead the unwary. What then was to be done? Fortunately, the Minister of Education, an enlightened liberal, could assure his colleague that he had carefully examined Count Tolstoi's methods, and convinced himself that they were worthy rather of praise than of censure, and although he, the Minister, could not say that he agreed with *all* the Count's views, he felt bound to thank and was determined to support him. Nevertheless the school soon died a natural death. Pupils were at first attracted by its novelty, but decamped the moment they felt they had learnt enough, and the attempt to found fourteen establishments of the same sort in other places failed for want of public support, whereupon Tolstoi abandoned the scheme altogether, and buried himself in the steppes inhabited by the nomadic Bashkirs, in order to "breathe fresh air, drink kumiss, and live the healthy, natural life of the brute beasts." To this residence among the Bashkirs we are indebted for that piercingly vivid story: "How much land does a man want?" which will be found in my former volume of selections, entitled "Tales from Tolstoi."

Tolstoi presently exchanged the rough hospitality of the nomadic Bashkirs for the comfort of a home of his own. On September 23rd, 1862, he married Sophia Behr, the second daughter of a Moscow physician. The bride was eighteen, the groom four-and-thirty, and at first the lady was not only indifferent to her

wooer, but took no pains to conceal the fact. It seems to have been a point of honour with the Behr family that the three daughters should be married in order of seniority, and they took it quite amiss when Tolstoi, passing over the eldest daughter, set his heart upon the second. The gentleman's final declaration, which was ultimately successful, is minutely described in "Anna Karenina," where Kitty Shcherbatskaya is Miss Behr, while Tolstoi has described himself to the life in the character of Levin. This union proved to be of the happiest, and was blessed with nine children, five boys and four girls, the youngest of whom was born in 1891. With his marriage the most joyous period of Tolstoi's life begins. Writing to a friend on October 9th, 1862, he says: "I have been married a fortnight, and I am a happy, a new, an altogether new man. My wife regularly looks after the cash and the accounts, and I have the bees, the sheep, a new garden, and the vines on my hands. Everything goes on pretty well, though of course it is not ideally perfect. My wife is no doll. She is of real help to me." His happiness is so great that it strikes him as being unnatural, but he consoles himself with the reflection that love becomes purer and stronger beneath the threats of despair! On another occasion, however, he admits, without reserve, that he is perfectly happy in his married life. He has discovered that Fanny is not only a loving wife but an excellent mother, and a helper even in his literary work. The advent of children of his own gave him an opportunity of thoroughly applying his pedagogic theories to the great problem of their education.

Biography

Playthings were banished from the nursery, but the children were allowed the utmost liberty, being never chastised corporally, and brought up as closely as possible beneath the eyes of their parents. Assuming that nowhere was the independence of children so liberally provided for as in England, Tolstoi committed his own children, between the age of three and nine, to the care of an English governess. The young people were strictly forbidden ever to command the servants, but to say "if you please" for everything they wanted, their parents setting them the example in this respect. The first symptom of lying was severely repressed by confining the offender to his room or putting him into Coventry, but the slightest sign of penitence was requited by instant forgiveness. The children were always with their parents except at meal times, or when they retired to rest, and the servants to whose charge they were then entrusted, were strictly cautioned to respect their innocence both by word and deed. We have it on the authority of one of Tolstoi's housekeepers that he was a first-rate manager. He saw to everything personally, negligence and slovenliness were impossible under such a master. The smallest detail was not beneath his notice. His pig-stys, his cowsheds, and stable were models of cleanliness. In his pigs he took particular pride. There were three hundred of them in all, and they lived in couples in separate stys. As for the dwelling-house, not a speck of dirt was allowed to settle there, the walls and floors had to be washed down every day. He would storm and rage if the least thing were neglected, and when his

doctor remonstrated with him on the violence of his temper as likely to prove injurious to his health, Tolstoi, like Peter the Great before him, would declare that it was his nature. "I want to control myself but cannot," he would always say. His industry and economy were promptly rewarded by prosperity. Count Tolstoi's estate was one of the comparatively few in Russia of the same size which more than paid its expenses. Yasnaya Polyana was especially famous for its excellent cream, which sold in the Moscow market at 60 kopecks (rs. 2½d.) per pound. No description, we are told, can give any idea of the cheerful and attractive life at Yasnaya Polyana during the first sixteen years of Tolstoi's happy married life (1862-1878). There was no subject, from cricket and football to the most abstruse branches of philosophy, in which Tolstoi did not take a lively interest, and though his acquaintances were few, they numbered among them some of the most enlightened and interesting men in Russia, including N. N. Strakhov, Prince Urusov, and the mathematician, A. Fet. As his sons grew up they became his closest companions. At his call they would joyfully come running out to join him in his long rambles (he rarely went a shorter distance than twelve miles at a stretch), or in a course of Swedish gymnastics, or compete with him at hurdle racing, or go a-hunting or shooting. In the winter the father and sons would be skating or sledging together, or bombarding snow fortifications of their own construction. Indeed Tolstoi asked for nothing better than to pass his days in the bosom of his family. He hated to be away from his wife and

Biography

children even for a single day, and hastened back to them with rapture when the detaining business had been happily transacted. It was at this time of his life that an acquaintance said of him that he was laughing all day long.

But Tolstoi had other and more serious work during the long winter evenings. It was in the midst of this period of supreme domestic felicity that his two immortal masterpieces, "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina," were composed.

"Voina i Mir" ("War and Peace") was begun immediately after his marriage, under the happiest auspices, and was completed in five years. That such a stupendous work, a whole library in itself, should have been composed within such a comparatively short time is sufficiently surprising, but our surprise becomes amazement when we learn that the author actually transcribed its thousands of pages with his own hand *seven times* before he was satisfied with it. With the possible exception of Turgenev's "Otsui i Dyeti" ("Fathers and Sons") five years earlier no other Russian book ever created such a sensation. Despite its obvious defects (defects far less discernible, however, in the original than the translations be they never so good), prolixity, an almost total absence of humour and a disposition to philosophize *à la Schopenhauer*, under whose fascination Tolstoi lay at that particular time,* "Voina i Mir" must ever

* On August 30th, 1869, Tolstoi wrote to a friend: "I have an indescribable enthusiasm for Schopenhauer, who has given me a succession of intellectual delights, the like of which I have never experienced before. I know not, of course, whether my opinions may

rank amongst the few supremely great masterpieces of the world's literature. It is a prose epic of vast dimensions, the history of the life and death struggle of the whole Russian nation with its most terrible adversary the first Napoleon, for the Russian nation is the real hero of the romance, even the leading characters, Kutuzov and Platon Karataev, being mere idealised exponents or representatives of the nation at large. Yet when Tolstoi forgets the philosopher in the artist, and condescends to probe the personal characters of the protagonists in the terrible struggle, he convinces as no other great writer has ever succeeded in convincing. The character of Napoleon is of itself a revelation. A great critic has well said that after reading the description of Alexander's interview with Bonaparte at Tilsit, one cannot rid oneself of the conviction that Tolstoi must have been concealed somewhere in the same room, for nowhere else do we seem to see "the little corporal" so vividly in the flesh as in the pages of "Voina i Mir." The philosophy of the book, as already hinted, is not without a tinge of Schopenhauerism. Thus, man's reason, coupled with his exacting egoism, is held to be the source of all human suffering. The main duty of man is self-renunciation and absolute subjection to the will of the mass of humanity which makes up the nation. Kutuzov was a great man simply because he understood this, and had no

not change, but I am confident at present that Schopenhauer is the greatest of geniuses . . . and I can only attribute his being so little known to the fact that the world at large is made up of mere idiots."

Biography

independent will of his own. Such a system necessarily postulates the non-existence of separate human individuality, and, logically pursued, would make unconscious instinct the best, because the strongest force in nature. Even religion is discarded, because, as Tolstoi plainly perceived, religion strengthens the sense of individuality by making man self-conscious. This after all is "Die Welt in Wille und Vorstellung" in a nutshell. No wonder, then, if Tolstoi's great contemporary, Dostoevsky, after reading "Voina i Mir," put the book down with the simple remark: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Yet Tolstoi himself at a later day was to reject Schopenhauer's philosophy as inadequate.

Tolstoi himself, at least while actually engaged upon the work, was not a little proud of "Voina i Mir." "I regard all that I have printed hitherto," he wrote to a friend, "as mere trial-work for my pen." The first volume appeared in 1867, the last in 1869. The work of preparatory research tried Tolstoi severely. "You have no idea," he wrote to Fet in November, '69, "how difficult the initial labour of deep ploughing in the field where I am obliged to sow has been to me. . . . 'Ars longa, vita brevis,' I think to myself every day."

After completing "Voina i Mir," Tolstoi set about writing a romance of the age of Peter the Great, and began collecting and arranging his materials with his usual energy and conscientiousness. "Dear little Lev," wrote his wife on this occasion, "is surrounded by piles of book, portraits, and pictures, and sits reading and writing and re-writing with puckered brows. In

the evening when the children have gone to bed he tells me of his plans."* But after five years of labour Tolstoi abandoned the idea altogether, because he had arrived at an estimate of Peter's character diametrically opposite to that which generally obtains, and discovered that he had no sympathy whatever with the Petrine period itself. "Not only do I find nothing great in the personality and the acts of Peter I., but I find that everything on the contrary was very bad," writes Tolstoi. "In all his so-called reforms he only looked after his own personal profit and not after the interests of the State. *In consequence of his disagreement with the Boyars as to his reforms, he founded St. Petersburg simply in order to be further away from them and to live his immoral life more freely.*" The sentence I have under-lined is a characteristic specimen of Tolstoi's unconscious one-sidedness, and of his inability to do justice to systems antagonistic to his own. Peter the Great undoubtedly transferred his capital to St. Petersburg in order to be further away from his Boyars. But why? Because he rightly perceived that reactionary Moscow would inevitably throw obstacles in the way of the reforms he judged to be indispensable to the civilising of ignorant and superstitious Russia, whereas St. Petersburg, with the command of the sea, was a window thrown open to the humanizing influences of the West. The prospect of greater license on the Neva than on the Moskva never entered into Peter's thoughts. Peter was always and everywhere frankly sensual; his strong

* While in the throes of composition Tolstoi demanded absolute quiet, not even his wife being allowed to interrupt him.

Biography

sexual instincts had no respect whatever for either persons or places.

I suspect myself that Tolstoi's real quarrel with Peter was due to the fact that the great Tsar was an unanswerable confutation of the novelist's pet theory of the uselessness of independent individuality, for if ever a man was superior to his age and his environment, and moulded them both to his will, it was Peter the Great. And yet there is a moral grandeur in Tolstoi's refusal to admire the exploits of the great national regenerator who owed so much of his success to the unflinching application of mere brute force. Mere achievement, however impressive, could never blind Tolstoi to the absence of moral greatness. We cannot, for instance, imagine him making a hero of a successful political freebooter like Frederick II. of Prussia.

"Anna Karenina," Tolstoi's second great work (his greatest in the opinion of many), was written between 1873 and 1876. The first seven parts appeared originally in the leading Moscow magazine, *Russky Vvestnik*, which, under the editorship of the eminent publicist, Michael Katkov, was a power in Russia. When, however, Katkov objected to certain portions of the eighth part of "Anna Karenina," which was diametrically opposed to his reactionary views, Tolstoi was greatly incensed, and cancelled his engagement with Katkov. "How dare a mere journalist alter a single line of *my* work?" he cried. Tolstoi indeed never had any great love for newspapers or gazettes. "I never read anything but classics," he once replied to a person who inquired what he usually

read. Yet very few classics really satisfied him. It was only after considerable hesitation that he allowed that that incomparable master of style, Pushkin, for instance, deserved the name of a classic at all, and even then Tolstoi was never tired of accusing the author of "Eugene Onyegin" of an excessive lightness of touch and a tendency to sacrifice truth and even intelligibility to brilliant and dramatic effects. Goethe, too, was never one of his favourites. "Righteous God!" he cried, with an emphasis that was anything but profane, "Goethe always forgets morality in his pursuit of beauty, and without the former the latter is worth nothing." In 1870 he began to study Greek and would read nothing else. Xenophon greatly pleased him, but he was still more delighted with Homer. "How glad I am that God has given me the humour for it," he writes to a friend; "I am convinced that of all the truly beautiful, the simply beautiful which the human mind has produced, I hitherto knew nothing." Of his own literary work he was still very proud, and yet his complacency was not without a tinge of self-contempt. In 1876 he wrote to a friend, "I continue under the delusion that what I am writing is very important, although I know that within a month the remembrance of it will be on my conscience. Sometimes I feel myself to be as a God from whom nothing is concealed, and at other times I am as stupid as a brute beast." It pleased him to reflect that he was already numbered amongst the greatest of Russian writers, and it is certain that from 1880 onwards he was without a rival in the national literature. In the fifties Turgenev had

Biography

been in the ascendant; in the sixties he had been obliged to share that distinction with Ostrofsky and Pisemsky; in the seventies the satirist, Galtuikov, and the most Russian of all the Russian novelists, Dostoevsky, held the public; but five years after the publication of "Anna Karenina," Tolstoi had distanced every competitor, and was undeniably supreme. And, characteristically enough, just as he had reached the height of his glory, doubts began to arise in his mind whether, to use a common phrase, the game was really worth the candle. Except for a very brief period in his youth Tolstoi had always despised mere style,* and had resolutely refused to cultivate the mere prettinesses of literature; but now he began to doubt whether literature itself, like art, as to which he had already made up his mind, was not a vain, worthless, and even pernicious pursuit. "On reflecting upon the fame I should gain from my writings," he tells us, "I said to myself: Good! supposing you become more famous even than Gogol, than Pushkin, than Shakespeare, than Molière, than all the great writers of the world, what then? And I could find nothing to say, absolutely nothing. . . . Some indefinable power drove me towards the idea of ridding myself of life somehow or other. Indeed, the thought of suicide became so attractive that I had to use artifice against it so as not immediately to put it into execution. And this happened to me when I was completely happy,

* In his youth Tolstoi took some pains to cultivate an elegant and beautiful style, which is seen at its best in "Kazaki" ("The Cossacks"), published in 1861. Yet there can be little doubt that his later style, so noble, simple, clear, poignant, and precise, with a constantly underlying suggestion of vast elemental power, is far more impressive.

when I had absolutely everything I wanted: a handsome family, ample means, fame constantly increasing, the respect of my neighbours, health, strength of mind and body, apparently everything. So long as I fancied life had some meaning in it, although I knew not how to express it, the reflection of life in art gave me pleasure, and it was pleasant to me to look upon life in this mirror, called art. But when I tried to discover the meaning of it all, the mirror struck me as tantalizing, or as simply nothing at all." This was in 1881. Evidently a mental and moral crisis was approaching. Twenty years previously he had been tormented by similar doubts, and, after much torturing self-analysis, had come to the conclusion that his writings were of no use to the people at large (in his mind the sole true test of their utility), and simply the product of egoism and self-glorification. "It is plain to me," he wrote in 1861, "that the compiling of magazines and books, the immense and ceaseless process of printing and publishing may be profitable enough for authors, printers, and publishers, but bring no benefit to the people, and therefore stands self-condemned." But then he had married. The happiness of a well-assorted match and a tranquil family life drew him quite away from all seeking after a general theory of life, and, as Tolstoi himself characteristically puts it, "although I considered all writing to be rubbish, I went on writing, nevertheless, for I had tasted of the seduction of writing, the seduction of the enormous literary renown of work which was really worthless."

But now, after an interval of twenty years, all the

Biography

old doubts and misgivings had returned with tenfold force, and Tolstoi was powerless to resist them. Utterly dissatisfied with the life he was living, convinced that it was both "senseless and terrible," he looked about him for something which would better satisfy his heart and conscience. First he turned to Science, only to receive an interminable quantity of dark answers to questions he had never asked, but as to the meaning of life he did not receive, and of course could not receive any answer, for Science does not and cannot occupy herself with such a question. Next he applied to Philosophy, but Philosophy could but tell him that the only way out of life was through death. Finally, he arrived at the conclusion that Faith was the one mainstay of life—but where was Faith to be found? To acquire knowledge is easy, but to acquire faith when you have none within you seemed well-nigh impossible. In this dilemma Tolstoi began by consorting with monks and pilgrims, by frequenting the Optinsky monastery, by shutting himself in his own room for private prayer, studying the Scriptures, and consulting Catholics, Protestants, and Raskolniks indiscriminately. He even took lessons in Hebrew from the Chief Rabbi of Moscow—and all without being able to arrive at any conclusion. "I had lived in the world 'five-and-fifty years,'" he pathetically confesses, "and during all that time, excluding fourteen or fifteen childish years, I had lived as a Nihilist in the completest sense of the word, that is to say, not as a socialist or a revolutionist, as the word is commonly understood, but as one who had no faith, who had nothing. Science and

Philosophy tell us that we must go on living as we are, in the firm belief that, according to the law of historical progress, after living for a long time badly, our life will right itself and suddenly become good of its own accord." We all know how the crisis ended. We all know how Tolstoi found peace at last by resolutely devoting his whole life to labouring for the people in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. "Live according to faith, and faith will come to you," was his eureka. His eccentric, arbitrary, and—there is really no other word for it—his absurd mutilation of Scripture, which he was forced to recast in order to make it fit in with his own very peculiar version of the Gospels (as to which by the way he dogmatizes every whit as magisterially as the church which he so hastily disparaged and which was finally driven to condemn him), are too well known to be alluded to here. But however we may deplore Tolstoi's provocative method of biblical interpretation, we cannot but reverence the sublime unselfishness of the life he has led ever since what we may perhaps call his conversion. From 1881 to the end of his life he literally devoted himself, body and soul, to the service of his poorer brethren, the Russian muzhiks, for whom he had always had an intense sympathy and admiration. He had done this in two ways, by working among them and by writing for them. He had always been of the opinion that "the only really honest labour worthy of a man was manual labour," and from henceforth he adopted the life of a common peasant, and worked vigorously alongside his labourers in his own fields.

Biography

"It is better," he observes, with equal wisdom and humanity, "it is better to help the poor by actually working at their own handicraft with them, than doing higher and perhaps more lucrative work, and giving them the profits thereof, inasmuch as by working with them you teach them to respect their own particular work by showing them that you yourself do not despise it, whereas any money you might give them would be apt to make them indolent and lazy." So he set about tilling his own fields, thatching his own cottage roofs, and teaching his peasantry thrift and economy by his own personal example. Nor was this all. During the terrible winter of 1891-92, when whole provinces of the Russian Empire presented the terrible and pathetic spectacle of an entire agricultural population, overwhelmed by snow, dying in thousands, without a word of complaint, though absolutely deprived of food, clothes, or firewood, Tolstoi hastened to the afflicted districts, and fed thousands daily at his own expense at improvised ordinaries, never quitting his post for a single instant till all danger was at an end. Indeed, but for his indefatigable efforts, whole parishes would have been depopulated. Nor was this the first time that Tolstoi had shown himself the benefactor of the people. Some ten years before, when a terrible famine was raging in the Province of Samara, which calamity, apparently for economical reasons, was not "officially recognised," Tolstoi collected subscriptions for the relief of the dying peasantry, and, energetically aided by Katkov and the *Moscow Gazette*, never ceased calling attention to the catastrophe till he actually

compelled the reluctant Government tardily to do its duty and mitigate a disaster it could no longer deny.

But perhaps Tolstoi has done even greater service to his beloved muzhiks with his pen than with his purse. Between 1880 and 1896 he composed for their benefit that series of simple, touching stories, so truly humane, so deeply Christian, and also, despite his own intentions, such exquisite masterpieces of realistic art in the truest sense of the word, some of the best of which were selected to form my former volume: "Tales from Tolstoi." We learn from his letter to Dembinsky in 1886, what moved Tolstoi thus to cater for the humblest of his readers: "These millions of poor Russians who just know their letters stand before us like so many hungry little daws with wide-open mouths crying to us: 'Gospoda* native writers! throw into these mouths of ours spiritual food worthy of you and us, nourish us hungry ones with the living literary word!'—And the simple and honest Russian people deserves that we should respond to its call."

During the last years of his life Tolstoi lived for the most part at Yasnaya Polyana, in the bosom of his family, working with and for his tenants continually, and yet finding time to answer daily the thousands of letters which reach him from all parts of the world, asking for his counsel and assistance in every imaginable sort of difficulty. He was, with perhaps the single exception of Fr. John of Cronstadt, indisputably the most popular personage in the

* Gentlemen.

Biography

Empire of the Tsar. In the winter he generally resided at Moscow, frequenting, by preference, charitable institutions and working men's concerts, despite his advanced age taking the liveliest interest in every question of the day, especially those relating to religion and morality, and delighting everyone by the alertness of his intelligence and the generous breadth of his sympathy. In 1899 the veteran astonished and delighted the world of literature with his "Voskresenie" ("Resurrection"), a noble work (despite its occasional extravagances) from every point of view, worthy of his best days, demonstrating that the hand of the master had lost none of its cunning, and piercing with the divination of genius to the deepest depths of human impulse and motive.

R. NISBET BAIN.

More Tales from Tolstoi.

I.—THE SNOWSTORM

I.

AT seven o'clock in the evening, after drinking tea I departed from a post-station, the name of which I don't remember, but I recollect it was somewhere in the military district of the Don, near Novochirkask. It was already dark when, wrapped up in my furs, I sat down with Alec in the sledge. In the shelter of the post-station it seemed warm and still. Although there was no snow above us, not a single tiny star was visible above our heads, and the sky appeared to be extraordinarily low and black in comparison with the pure snowy plain stretching out before us.

We had scarce passed the dark figures of the mills—one of which was clumsily waving one of its huge wings—and got clear of the station, when I observed that the road was heavier and more obstructed, and the wind began to blow upon my left side more violently and beat upon the flank, tail, and mane of the horse and regularly raise and carry away the snow

More Tales from Tolstol

torn up by the curved shafts of the sledge and the hoofs of the horses. The little sledge-bell began to be silent, a current of cold air began to flow from some opening into my sleeve and down my back, and the advice of the inspector not to go at all, lest I should wander about the whole night and be frozen to death on the road, at once occurred to me.

"Haven't we lost our way?" I said to the driver; and receiving no answer, I repeated the question in a still plainer form: "Do you think we shall reach the post-station, driver, or shall we lose our way?"

"God knows!" he replied, without turning his head, "it's only human to go astray, and the road is nowhere visible, my little master!"

"Will you tell me whether you think we shall get to the post-station or not?" I continued to ask. "Shall we get there, I say?"

"We ought to get there," said the driver, and he murmured something else which I could not quite catch because of the wind.

I didn't want to turn back, but to wander about all night in the frost and snow in the absolutely barren steppe as this part of the military district of the Don really is, was also not a very pleasant prospect to contemplate. Moreover, although I was unable to examine him very well in the darkness, my driver, somehow or other, did not please me, nor did he inspire me with confidence. He sat squarely instead of sideways; his body was too big; his voice had too much of a drawl; his hat, somehow or other, was not a driver's hat—it was too big and bulky; he did not urge on the horses as he should have done; he

held the reins in both hands as a lacquey does who sits on the box behind the coachman and, above all, I did not believe in him because his ears were tied round with a cloth. In a word, I did not like the look of him, and that serious hunched back of his bobbing up and down before me boded no good.

"In my opinion it would be better to turn back," said Alec; "it is no joke to get lost."

"My little master, you see what sort of driving it is: no road to be seen, and your eyes all bunged up!" growled the driver.

We hadn't gone a quarter of an hour when the driver stopped the horses, gave the reins to Alec, clumsily disengaged his legs from their sitting position and, trampling over the snow in his big boots, went to try and find the road.

"I say, where are you?" I cried, "have we gone astray, or what?"

But the driver did not answer, me and turning his face in the opposite direction to that in which the wind was blowing—it had cut him in the very eyes—went away from the sledge.

"Well, what is it?" I asked when he had turned back again.

"Nothing at all," said he with sudden impatience and anger, as if it was *my* fault that he had lost the road, and slowly thrusting his big boots into the front part of the sledge again, he slowly grasped the reins together with his frozen mittens.

"What shall we do?" I asked when we had again moved forward.

"Do? Why, go whither God allows us!" And on

More Tales from Tolstoi

we went at the same jig-trot, obviously across country, sometimes over snow piled up bushels high, sometimes over brittle, naked ice.

Notwithstanding the cold, the snow on our collars thawed very quickly ; the snow drift below increased continually, and fine dry flakes began to fall from above.

It was plain we were going God only knew whither, for after going along for another quarter of an hour we did not see a single verst post.*

"What do you think, eh?" I said again to the driver; "do you think we shall get to the station?"

"To which station? We may get back, if the horses take it into their heads to try, they'll take us right enough, but as to reaching the other station, scarcely, we might perish, that's all."

"Then turn back by all means," said I, "at any rate. . ."

"Turn the horses round, do you mean?"

"Yes, turn 'em round!"

The driver let go the reins. The horses began to run more quickly, and although I observed that we had turned round, yet the wind had changed too, and soon, through the snow the windmills were visible. The driver took heart, again and began to be loquacious.

"The Anudiuses got into the drifts and turned back just in the same way when they came from this station," said he, "and passed the night by the haystacks; they only got in by morning. They were only too thankful for the shelter of the

* Corresponding to our milestone.

The Snowstorm

haystacks ; they might have easily frozen to death. It *was* cold, and one of them did have his legs frost-bitten, so that he died of it three weeks later."

"But now you see it is not so cold, and it has grown quieter ; might not we drive on now, eh ?"

"It's fairly warm, warm, oh yes ! and the snow's coming down. Now we'll turn back, as it seems easier going and the snow comes down thicker. You might drive if you had a courier, but you'll do it at your own risk. Are you joking ? Why, you'd be frozen ! And what should I say who am responsible for your honour ?"

II.

Just then there was a sound of little bells behind us, the bells of some *troika*, a three-horse sledge, which was rapidly overtaking us.

"That is a courier's bell," said my driver ; "there's one such courier at every post-station."

And, indeed, the little bell of the front *troika*, the sound of which was now plainly borne to us by the wind, was an extraordinarily welcome sound to hear : a pure, musical, sonorous, and slightly droning sound. As I afterwards ascertained, it was a hunter's arrangement of three little bells—one big one in the centre and two little ones adjusted to tierce. The sound of this tierce and the droning quinte, resounding through the air, was extraordinarily penetrating and strangely pleasant in that vast and voiceless steppe.

"The post is in haste," said my driver when the foremost of the three horses was level with us.

More Tales from Tolstoi

"What sort of a road, eh? Can one get through?" cried he to the hindmost driver; but the fellow only shouted to his horses and didn't answer him.

The sound of the little bells quickly died away on the wind as soon as the post-car had passed us.

My driver must now have felt a bit ashamed, I fancy.

"We'll go on, sir," said he; "these people have gone on before us and have left a fresh track, which we can now follow."

I agreed, and again we turned towards the wind and crawled along a bit through the deep snow. I kept a side-long glance upon the road so as to see that we did not wander away from the track made by the sledge. For two versts the track was plainly visible, after that the only thing observable was a very slight unevenness under the curved sides of the sledge, and I began to look straight in front of me. The third verst pole we could still make out, but the fourth we could not find at all. As before, we were driving both against and with the wind, both left and right, and at last it got to such a pass that the driver said we had deviated to the right. I said we had gone to the left, while Alec proved that we were absolutely going back again. Once more we stopped for a while, the driver extricated his big feet and crawled out to find the road; but it was all in vain. I also made up my mind to get out for once and see for myself whether that was not the road which I saw glimmering indistinctly; but scarcely had I taken six steps forward, with the utmost difficulty, against the wind and persuaded myself that everywhere were

The Snowstorm

the selfsame uniform white layers of snow and that the road existed only in my imagination—than I no longer saw the sledge.

"Driver! Alec!" I cried, but my voice!—well I felt that the wind snatched it right out of my mouth and carried it in the twinkling of an eye away from me. I have a very distinct recollection of the loud, penetrating, and even desperate voice with which I once more yelled: "Driver!" when he was only two good paces distant from me. His black figure, whip in hand, and with his large hat perched on one side, suddenly grew up in front of me. He led me to the sledge.

"Still warm, thank goodness!" said he, "but it's bad if the frost does catch you, my little master!" said he.

"Let the horses go; we must go back," said I, taking my seat on the sledge. "I suppose you can guide them, driver?"

"I must guide them."

He threw aside the reins, struck the saddle of the thill horse thrice with his whip and again we went on somewhither for a bit. We went along for about half an hour. Suddenly we again heard in front of us the, to me, familiar little hunting-bell and two more besides; but this time they were coming towards us. It was the same three *troikas* returning to the post-station after delivering the mails, with the fresh horses fastened on behind. The courier's *troika*, with its three powerful horses with the hunting bells came rapidly forward. A single driver sat on the box, shouting lustily. Behind, in the middle of the empty

More Tales from Tolstol

sledge, sat a couple of drivers. I could hear their loud and merry discourse. One of them was, smoking a pipe, and the sparks, kindled by the wind, lit up part of his face.

As I looked at them I began to be ashamed that I had been afraid to go on, and my driver must have experienced much the same sensation, for we said with one voice : "Let us go after them"

III.

The hindmost *troikas* had not yet passed when my driver turned clumsily and struck the attached horses with the sledge shafts. One of the *troika* team thereupon fell heavily, tearing away the traces and plunging to one side.

"You cock-eyed devil, don't you see where you're going, driving over people like that? Devil take you!" began one of the drivers in a hoarse, quavering voice.

He was smallish and an old fellow, as far as I could judge from his voice and his position. He had been sitting in the hinder *troika*, but now leaped quickly out of the sledge and ran to the horses, never ceasing the whole time to curse my driver in the most coarse and cruel manner.

But the horses would not be pacified. The driver ran after them, and in a minute both horses and driver had vanished in the white mist of the snow-storm.

"Vas-il-y ! bring the chestnut hither, we shall never get them else," his voice still resounded.

The Snowstorm

One of the drivers, a very tall man, got out of the sledge, silently detached his three horses, saddled and bridled one of them, and, crunching the snow beneath him, disappeared in the direction of his comrade. We, with the two other horses, went after the courier's *troika*, which, ringing its bell, set off in front at full gallop ; we just let ourselves go without troubling any more about the road.

"A pretty way of catching them!" said my driver, alluding to the other driver, who had gone off after the horses ; "he'll never catch' em, and he's leading the spare horse to a place he'll never get him out of again."

Ever since my driver had begun to go back, he had become in better spirits and more inclined to be talkative, which I, of course, did not fail to take advantage of as, so far, I had no desire to sleep. I began to ask him all about himself and whence he came, and soon found out that he was a fellow-countryman, hailing from Tula country, being a small proprietor in the village of Kirpechny ; that their land was of very little good to them and had quite ceased to produce grain since the cholera visitation ; that there were two brothers at home, while a third had enlisted as a soldier ; that the supply of bread would not hold out till Christmas, and they had to hire themselves out to make more money ; that the younger brother was master in the house because he was married, while my friend was a widower ; that an *artel*, or society of drivers, went forth from their village every year ; that though he was not a coachman by profession he served at the post-station

More Tales from Tolstol

in order to be of some help to his brother ; that he lived here, thank God, on 120 paper roubles a year, of which he sent a hundred home to his family, and that he had a pretty good time of it, but that couriers were veritable beasts, and that the people he had to do with here were always cursing him.

"That driver, for instance, why should he curse me? my little master! Did I overturn his horses on purpose? Why, I wouldn't do any harm to anyone! And why should he go scurrying after them? They would be sure to come back of their own accord. And now he'll only make the horses starve to death besides coming to grief himself" repeated the God-fearing little muzhik.

"But what is that black thing yonder?" said I, observing some black objects just in front of us.

"A train of wagons!—a nice way of going along, I must say," continued he when we had come abreast with the huge wagons covered with mats, going one after another on wheels. "Look! not a soul to be seen; they are all asleep. The horse is the wisest of them all. He knows very well what he is about. Nothing in the world will make him miss the road. We too will go alongside of them and then we shall be all right," added he, "and know where we are going."

It really was a curious sight. There were those huge wagons covered with snow from the matting atop to the wheels below, moving along absolutely alone. Only in the front corner the snow-covered mat was raised a couple of inches for a moment as our little bells resounded close to the wagons and a hat popped up. The big piebald horse, with

The Snowstorm

outstretched neck and straining back, deliberately proceeded along the absolutely hidden road, monotonously shaking his shaggy head beneath the whitening shaft and pricking up one snow-covered ear as we came abreast of him.

After we had gone on for another half-hour the driver again turned to me.

"What do you think, sir; we are going nicely along now, eh?"

"I don't know," I replied.

"Before, the wind was anyhow, but now we are going tight in the midst of the storm. No, we shall not get there; we too have lost our way," he concluded with the utmost calmness.

Evidently, although a great coward, and afraid of his own shadow, he had become quite tranquil as soon as there were a good many of us together and he was not obliged to be our guide and responsible for us. With the utmost *sang froid* he criticised the mistakes of the driver in front of us as if it had anything whatever to do with him. I observed indeed that now and then the *troika* in front was sometimes in profile, from my point of view, to the left and sometimes to the right, and it also seemed to me as if we were encircling a very limited space. However, it might have been an optical delusion, as also the circumstance that, occasionally, it seemed to me as if the *troika* in front was climbing up a mountain, or going along a declivity, or under the brow of a hill, whereas the steppe was everywhere uniformly level.

After we had proceeded for some time longer I

More Tales from Tolstoi

observed, or so it seemed to me, far away, on the very horizon, a long, black, moving strip of something ; but in a moment it became quite plain to me that this was the very same train of wagons which we had overtaken and outstripped. Just the same creaking wheels, some of them no longer turning, enveloped in snow ; just the same people asleep beneath their mats, and just the same leading piebald horse, with steaming, distended nostrils, smelling out the road and pricking up his ears.

"Look, we have gone round and round and are coming out by this train of wagons again !" said my driver in a sulky tone. "The courier's horses are good ones, though he drives them villainously, but ours are so-so and always stopping, just as if we had been driving all night long."

He coughed a bit.

"Shall we turn off somewhere, sir, for our sins ?"

"Why ? We are bound to arrive somewhere as it is."

"Arrive somewhere ! We shall have to make a night of it in the steppe : that's what we shall do. How it is snowing, my little master !"

Although it did seem strange to me that the driver in front of us, who had obviously lost his road and had no idea of the direction in which he was going, took no trouble to find it again, but continued to drive at full tilt, cheerily, shouting to his horses, I did not want to separate from him all the same.

"Follow after them !" I said.

The driver went on, but he drove along even more unwillingly than before and no longer conversed with me.

IV.

The snowstorm was growing more and more violent. The flakes descended fine and dry, apparently it was freezing hard. My nose and cheeks grew numb with cold, currents of cold air penetrated my furs more and more frequently and it was necessary to huddle up in them more closely. Occasionally the sledge bumped up against a bare, ice-clad hummock, from which it scattered the snow in every direction.

As I had travelled some score or so of versts without a night's rest, notwithstanding the fact that I was very much interested in the issue of our wanderings, I involuntarily shut my eyes and dozed off. All at once, when I opened my eyes again, I was struck by what seemed to me in the first moment a bright light illuminating the white plain; the horizon had considerably widened; the low, black sky had suddenly disappeared; in every direction were visible white oblique lines of falling snow; the figures of the *troika* people in front appeared more plainly, and when I looked upwards it seemed to me for the first moment as if the clouds had parted and that only the falling snow covered the sky. Whilst I had been slumbering the moon had arisen and threw her cold and clear light through the scattered clouds and falling snow. The one thing I saw clearly was my sledge, the horses, the driver, and the three *troikas* going on in front: the first *troika*, the courier's, on the box of which one of the drivers was still sitting urging his horses on at a good round pace; the second, in which sat the two other drivers, who had thrown

More Tales from Tolstoi

the reins aside and made themselves a shelter against the wind out of their *armyaks*,* never ceasing to smoke their pipes the whole time, as was clear from the sparks proceeding from that quarter, and the third *troika*, in which nobody was visible—presumably the driver was sleeping in the middle of it. Before I went to sleep, however, the leading driver had at rare intervals stopped his horses and tried to find the way. Then, every time we stopped, the howling of the wind became more audible and the enormous quantity of snow suspended in the air more strikingly visible. I now saw by the light of the moon, half obscured by the snowstorm, the small, squat figure of the driver, with the big whip in his hand, with which he flicked at the snow in front of him, moving backwards and forwards in the bright mist and coming back again to the sledge, leaping sideways on to the box seat, and amidst the monotonous whistling of the wind, the alert, sonorous ringing and clanging of the little bells was audible once more. Every time the driver in front leaped out to look for the road or the verst posts one could hear the brisk, self-confident voice of one of the drivers shouting to the driver in front :

“Do you hear, Ignashka! take the road to the left! You’ll find more shelter to the right!” Or, “Why are you going round and round like a fool? Go by the snow; take the lee of it, and you’ll come out all right!” Or, “A little more to the right, a little more to the right, my brother! Don’t you see

* A peasant’s cloak of rough camel-hair.

The Snowstorm

there's something black yonder—some sign-post or other?" Or, "Where are you going? Where are you going? Loose the piebald nag and go on in front and he'll guide you to the road straight away. It'll be much better if you do that!"

"This selfsame person, who was so fond of giving advice, not only did not loose the side-horse and go over the snow to look for the road, but did not even so much as thrust his nose from out of his *armyak*, and when Ignashka, the driver in front, in reply to one of his counsels, shouted to him to go in front himself if he knew where to go so well, the counsellor replied that if he had been travelling with courier's horses he *would* have gone on and led them to the right road straight away, "but *our* horses cannot go on in front in snow-drifts, not such nags as these, anyway."

"Then you can hold your jaw!" replied Ignashka, cheerily whistling to his horses.

The other driver, sitting in the same sledge with the counsellor, said not a word to Ignashka, and in fact did not interfere at all, although he was not asleep either, at least I assumed as much from the fact that his pipe continued unextinguished, and also from the circumstance that whenever we stopped I heard his measured, uninterrupted narration. He was telling some tale or other. Only when Ignashka suddenly halted for the sixth or seventh time, this other driver plainly became very angry at being interrupted by such leisurely procedure, and he shouted at him:

"What! stopping again! You want to find the road, eh? It's a snowstorm we're in, and there's an end of it! Why, even a land-surveyor wouldn't be

More Tales from Tolstoi

able to find the road now. Go on as long as the horses can drag us! Never fear; we shan't freeze to death! Go on, I say!"

"Never fear, indeed! Last year a postilion *was* frozen to death!" observed my driver.

The driver of the third *troika* did not wake the whole time, only once, during a stoppage, the rounsellor shouted:

"Philip! I say, Philip!" and receiving no answer observed: "I wonder if he's frozen? You might go and see, Ignashka!"

Ignashka, who hastened to do everyone's bidding, went to the sledge and began to shake the sleeper.

"Why, he's drunk as drunk—like a log!" said he, "I say! you! are you frozen?" he said, shaking him violently.

The sleeper babbled something or other and cursed him.

"He's alive, all right, my brother!" said Ignashka; and again he ran forward and again we went on, and so quickly indeed, this time, that the little brown side horse attached to my *troika*, constantly lashed up from behind, more than once broke into a clumsy gallop.

V.

I think it must have been almost midnight when we were joined by the little old man and Vas-il-y, who had been in pursuit of the stampeded horses. They had found the horses and pursued and overtaken us; but how they had done so in the dark, blinding snow-

The Snowstorm

storm, in the midst of the barren steppe, has always remained unintelligible to me. The little old man, moving his elbows and legs, rode up at a gallop on the brown horse. The two other horses were attached to the collar: in the snowstorm it was impossible to leave the horses to themselves. On coming up to his, the old fellow began attacking my driver again.

"Look here, you cock-eyed devil, really if . . ."

"Hie, Uncle Matvich!" shouted the tale-teller from the second sledge, "alive, eh? Crawl in here!" But the old man did not answer him, but went on with his cursing. When it appeared to him that he had cursed enough, he did go to the second sledge.

"Caught 'em all?" they said to him from that quarter.

"Of course! Why not?"

And his diminutive figure, on the trot, with the upper part of his body bobbing up and down on the back of the horse, after leaping out on to the snow, ran forward without stopping behind the sledge, and scrambled in to where they were, with his legs sticking up in the air as he forced his way through the orifice. Tall Vas-il-y, as before, took his seat in silence on the box seat in the foremost sledge alongside Ignashka, whom he helped to look for the road.

"You see what a curser he is, my little master!" murmured my driver.

We went along for some time after this, without stopping, over the white wilderness, in the cold, transparent, and quivering light of the snowstorm. Every time I opened my eyes, there in front of me was the

More Tales from Tolstoi

selfsame clumsy hat and back, covered with snow ; there, too, was the selfsame low shaft-bow, beneath which, between the tightly drawn leather reins, and always the same distance off, the head of the brown horse with the black mane deliberately bending in the direction of the wind, moved slowly up and down. Behind its back one could also see, to the right, the bay side-horse, with its tail tied up into a bunch, occasionally bumping against the front board of the sledge. Look down—and there was the selfsame snow thumping against the sides of the sledge, which the wind stubbornly lifted and carried off in one direction. In front, always at the same distance, the leading *troika* ran steadily along ; on the right and on the left everything was white and twinkling. In vain the eye sought for some new object : not a post, not a rick, not a fence—nothing at all was visible. Everywhere everything was white, white and mobile ; sometimes the horizon seemed incomprehensibly far off, sometimes compressed within two paces distance in every direction. Sometimes a high white wall would grow up suddenly on the right and run alongside the sledge, then it would as suddenly disappear and grow up in front only to run further and further off and again disappear. If you looked up it would appear quite light the first instant, and you would seem to see little stars through the mist ; but the little stars vanished from your view ever higher and higher, and all you saw was the snow, which fell past your eyes on to your face and into the collar of your furs ; the sky was identically bright everywhere, identically

white, colourless, uniform, and constantly mobile. The wind seemed to be perpetually shifting. Now it blew right against you and blinded your eyes, now it blew teasingly sideways and flung the collar of your fur coat over your head and mockingly flapped it in your face, now it would howl from behind through some unprotected crevice. Audible throughout was the faint, miserable, crunching of hoofs and sledge-boards over the snow and the expiring tinkle of the little bells when we passed over deep snow. Only very rarely, when we drove against the wind, and over naked, frozen, stony ground, did the energetic whistling of Ignaty and the thrilling sound of the little bell with the resonant, droning quinte come flying, plainly audible, towards us, and then these sounds would immediately and pleasantly disturb the melancholy character of the wilderness, subsequently falling into a monotonous melody persisting with intolerable fidelity always on one and the same *motif*, which I involuntarily imagined to myself as I listened to them. One of my feet presently began to grow numb, and when I turned about a bit in order the better to shelter it, the snow which had accumulated on my collar and hat plunged down my neck and made me shiver; but, on the whole, I was still warm enough in my well-warmed furs, and a feeling of drowsiness came over me.

VI.

Recollections and ideas alternated with the most strenuous rapidity in my imagination.

More Tales from Tolstol

The counsellor also kept on bawling out of the second sledge—I wondered what sort of a yokel he might be. No doubt a rufus, well set up, with short legs, I thought to myself, something in the style of Theodor Filipovich, our old waiter. And then I saw before me the staircase of our big house, and four of the men-servants in linen suits, walking heavily and dragging the pianoforte out of one of the wings. Theodor Filipovich, with the sleeves of his nankeen surtout turned up, and carrying a pedal, was running on in front, unloosening the bars and bolts, and there he stood, tugging away at a napkin, bustling about, insinuating himself between their legs and making a mess of everything, never ceasing all the time to screech with a funny voice :

“This way, this way, you fellows in front ! Like this, tail up, up, up, up, I say, carry it through the door ! Like this !”

“We can manage it ; leave us alone, Theodor Filipovich !” timidly observed the gardener, clinging to the balustrade, all red with the exertion and supporting one corner of the grand-piano with all his remaining strength.

But Theodor Filipovich would not be quiet.

“What an idea ?” I thought as I deliberated about it. Does he fancy he is useful, indispensable, or is he simply glad because God has given him the self-confident, convincing eloquence which he dispenses with such sweet satisfaction ? It must be so.” And then I saw somewhere or other a pond, a lot of tired men-servants up to their knees in water dragging a fishing-net, and there again was Theodor Filipovich

The Snowstorm

with a watering-can, running along the bank and shouting at them, but only very rarely approaching the water's edge in order to touch with his hands some golden carp and pour away the dirty water and fill his can with fresh. And then it was midday in the month of July. I was walking along somewhere, over some quite newly mown garden grass, beneath the burning, perpendicular rays of the sun; I was still very young; there was something I lacked, something I very much wanted. I was going to a pond, to my favourite spot, between beds of wild eglantine and an avenue of birch trees, and I lay down to sleep. I remember the feeling with which I lay down: I looked through the pretty, prickly branches of the eglantine at the black, dry hummocks of earth and at the translucent, bright-blue mirror of the pond. It was a sort of feeling of naive self-satisfaction and melancholy. Everything around me was so exceedingly beautiful, and this beauty had such a strong effect upon me that it seemed to me as if I'also were good, and the only vexatious thing was that nobody admired me. It was hot; I tried to sleep in order to get some rest, but the flies, the intolerable flies, gave me no respite even here, and they began to collect around me, and doggedly, thickly, like so many little pebbles, they darted about from my temples to my arms. The bees were humming not far from me, in the sun-burnt patches of the grass, and yellow-winged butterflies, as if wearied by the sultriness, were flitting from blade to blade of grass. I looked up: it pained my eyes—the sun shone too strongly through the bright leaves

More Tales from Tolstol

of the thick-foliaged birch tree loftily, but very gently, rocking its branches above my head, and it seemed hotter than ever. I covered my face with a pocket handkerchief. I felt oppressed, and the flies regularly stuck to my arms, on which a light sweat burst forth. The sparrows were busy in the dog-rose hedges. One of them hopped along the ground a few yards from me, pretended once or twice to be pecking the ground energetically, and making the tiny twigs crackle beneath his feet and chirping merrily, flew out of the bosque; another sparrow also perched upon the ground, trimmed his tail, glanced around him, and then, like a dart, flew chirping after the first sparrow. The blows of the mangling stick on the wet linen were audible from the pond, and the sound of these blows was borne downwards and carried along the surface of the pond. Audible also were the laughter, talking, and splashing of the bathers. The breeze shook noisily the summits of those birches that were further from me; nearer at hand I heard it begin to flutter the grass, and now the leaves of the dog-rose bosque fell a-quivering and rustled upon their branches, and now, raising the corner of the handkerchief and tickling my perspiring face, the fresh current of air careered right up to me. Through the opening made by the lifted 'kerchief flew a fly and buzzed terror-stricken round my moist mouth. An odd piece of dried twig insinuated itself under my back. No, lying down was impossible. Suppose I went and had a refreshing bath. But at that very moment I hear quite close to the bosque hastening footsteps and a terrified female voice saying :

The Snowstorm

"Alas Batyushka! What is to be done? There's not a man in sight!"

"What is it? what is it?" I ask, running out into the sun to the maid-servant who ran past me crying and wailing. She only looked round at me, waved her hands and ran on further. And now there appears old Martha, who is seventy years of age, holding a handkerchief in her hand which she had torn from her head, bounding along and dragging one leg after her in a woollen stocking and hastening to the pond. Two little girls were also running, holding each other by the hand, and a boy of ten, in his father's surtout, holding on to the skirt of one of them, hastened on behind.

"What's the matter?" I asked them.

"A muzhik has been drowned."

"Where?"

"In the pond."

"One of our people, eh?"

"No, a vagabond."

Ivan, the coachman, shuffling with his big slippers over the mown grass, and the fat messenger Yakov, breathing with difficulty, were also running to the pool, and I ran after them.

I remember the feeling within me, which said to me: "Go ahead! throw yourself into the pond and drag out the muzhik; save him and they'll all admire you so," which was what I desired above all.

"Where is he? where is he?" I inquired of the crowd of house-servants collected round the shores of the pond.

"There he is, right at the bottom, over yonder, near

More Tales from Tolstol

to the bathing-place," said a washerwoman, placing her wet linen on a drying pole. "I saw him go under, and then he appeared somewhere else, and then he disappeared, and then he came up again once more; and how he shrieked, 'I'm sinking, Batyushka!' and down below he went again, and only bubbles came up after him; and as soon as I saw that a muzhik was drowning I cried out, 'Batyushka, there's a muzhik drowning!'"

And the washerwoman, throwing the yoke-beam over her shoulder, waddled along the narrow path away from the pond.

"It is a sin and a shame!" said Yakov Ivanov, the steward, with a despairing voice; "what a to-do the County Court will make about it! There will be no end to it!"

At last a muzhik, with a scythe in his hand, forced his way through the crowd of women, children and old men, elbowing each other on the shore, and hanging his scythe on the branch of a cythus, very deliberately began to pull off his boots.

"Where was it? Where was he drowned?" I kept on asking, wishing to pitch myself in there and do something or other out of the way.

But they only pointed out to me the smooth surface of the pond, which was rarely ruffled by a passing breeze. It was incomprehensible to me how he could have got drowned; the water, as smooth, beautiful, and indifferent as ever, stood above him, glistening like gold in the midday sun, and it seemed to me as if I could do nothing and astonish nobody, especially as I swam but awkwardly; but the muzhik had

The Snowstorm

already drawn his shirt over his head and flung himself into the water straight away. They all kept looking at him with confidence and intense expectation; but when he had got up to his shoulders in the water the muzhik deliberately turned back again and put on his shirt, he did not know how to swim.

People came running together; the crowd grew denser and denser; the old women held on to each other, but none rendered the slightest assistance. Those who had only just arrived at once began to give advice, made a fuss, and their faces wore an expression of fear and despair; of those who had been there sometime already, some becoming tired of standing, sat down on the grass, and others turned back and went away. Old Matrena inquired of her daughter whether she had closed the door of the stove; the little boy in his father's surtout violently flung stones into the water.

But now, barking loudly and looking back doubtfully, Trezerka, the dog of Theodor Filipovich, came running down the hill, and presently the form of Theodor himself, also running down the hill and bawling something or other, emerged from behind the dog-rose hedge.

"What's up?" he cried, taking off his surtout as he came along, "A man drowned and all of you stand gaping here! Give me a rope!"

They all gazed upon Theodor Filipovich with hope and terror, while he, resting one hand on the shoulder of one of the house-servants, worked off the boot on his right leg with the toe of his left foot.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Over yonder, where the crowd is, on the right side of the willow, that's the spot, Theodor Filipovich, just there," someone said to him.

"I know," he answered, and frowning, no doubt in response to the indications of shamefacedness visible in the mob of women, he took off his shirt and little cross, which latter he gave to the gardener's little boy, who stood before him in a cringing attitude, and energetically strutting over the mown grass, drew near to the pond.

Trezerka, who, in doubt as to the meaning of the rapid movements of his master, had stopped close to the crowd and, sitting down on the bank, snapped off several blades of grass, now looked inquiringly at him, and suddenly, with a joyful yelp, plunged into the water with his master. During the first moment nothing was visible except foam and water drops, which flew right over to where we stood; but presently Theodor Filipovich, gracefully waving his arms and rhythmically raising and lowering his back, was seen swimming briskly towards the shore. Trezerka too, snorting and choking, was also coming rapidly back, shaking himself in the midst of the crowd and rolling on his back on the shore to dry himself. At the selfsame moment when Theodor Filipovich swam up to the shore two coachmen came running up to the willow with a net wound round a pole. Theodor Filipovich, for some reason or other, lifted up his hands, sneezed once, twice, thrice, each time spurting a jet of water out of his mouth, shaking his hair neatly and making no answer to the questions which showered down upon

The Snowstorm

him from all sides. At last he emerged on to the bank and, as far as I could make out, he was occupying himself solely with the proper adjustment of the net. They drew out the net, but at the bottom of it there was nothing but mud and a few little carp swimming about in it. Just as the net was being dragged in a second time I arrived on that side of the pond.

The only sounds audible were the voice of Theodor Filipovich distributing commands, the splashing in the water of the net-rope, and groans of horror.

"Now, then, put some heart into it and pull all together!" cried the voice of Theodor Filipovich.

"There's something this time! it drags heavily, my brethren!" cried a voice.

But now the net, in which two or three carp were floundering, all wet, and crushing the grass beneath it, was dragged ashore. And then dimly seen through the thin agitated layer of turbid water, something white was apparent in the extended net. A groan of horror, not loud but penetratingly audible in the death-like silence, ran through the crowd.

"Put a little more heart into it; drag it on to the dry ground!" sounded the authoritative voice of Theodor Filipovich; and the doomed man was dragged by main force over the cropped stalks of the burdocks and thistles right up to the willow tree.

And now I see before me my dear old aunt in her white dress; I see her fringed lilac sunshade so utterly out of place in this picture of death so horrible from its very simplicity, and I see her face ready at that very instant to burst into tears. I remember the

More Tales from Tolstol

expression of disenchantment in her face at the idea that these drag-nets were altogether useless, and I remember the sick, sorrowing feeling I experienced when she said to me with the naïve egoism of love: "Let us go, my friend! Ah! how horrible it is! And you to go and bathe and swim all alone as you do, too!"

I remember how bright and sultry the sun was; how it burnt up the dry, crumbling earth beneath our feet; how it played on the surface of the pond; how gigantic carp were hurrying and scurrying near the banks; how the smoothness of the centre of the pond was disturbed by shoals of fishes; how high in the sky a vulture was wheeling right above some ducks, who, quacking and splashing, were making for the middle of the pond through the reeds; how threatening, white, curly clouds were collecting on the horizon; how the mud, dragged ashore by the net, was gradually being trampled into the ground; and how, walking along the dyke, I again heard the stroke of a paddle resounding over the pond.

But this paddle was now ringing just as if the sound of the paddles was blending together into a tierce; and this sound tormented and wearied me all the more because I knew that this paddle was a bell and Theodor Filipovich could not make it keep quiet. And this paddle, like an instrument of torture, was pressing my leg, which was freezing, and I awoke.

It seemed to me as if I had been awakened by a sudden jolt and by two voices speaking close beside me.

The Snowstorm

"Hillo! Ignat! Ignat, I say!" cried the voice of my driver, "take a passenger! It's all one to you, and it's no use my trying to keep up. Take one, I say!"

The voice of Ignat answered close beside me :

"Why should I be responsible for a passenger? You've got half a stoop yet, haven't you?"

"Half a stoop, indeed! There's a quarter of a stoop, already!"

"A quarter of a stoop! What an idea!" screeched the other voice. "Fancy plaguing a horse for the sake of a quarter of a stoop!"

I opened my eyes. Always the same unendurable, quivering snow blizzard in one's eyes, and the selfsame drivers and horses, but close beside me I saw a sledge. My driver had caught up Ignat, and we had been going on side by side for some time. Notwithstanding that the voice from the other sledges had advised my driver not to take in less weight than a half stoop, Ignat had suddenly stopped the *troika*.

"Let us change about then! A good job for you! Put in a quarter stoop, as we shall arrive to-morrow. How much do you make it, eh?"

My driver, with unusual vivacity, leaped out into the snow, bowed down before me, and begged me to transfer myself to Ignat. I was quite willing to do so, but it was clear that the God-fearing little muzhik was so satisfied with the new arrangement that he must needs pour forth his joy and gratitude on some one or other; he bowed down before me and thanked me and Alec and Ignashka.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Well, there you are now, thank God. And I tell you what it is, my little master, we have been wandering about half the night, without knowing whither. That chap there will bring us in all right, my little master, and my horses are done up already."

And he transferred my things with energetic officiousness.

While they were transferring the things I, following the direction of the wind, which carried me along, as it were, went to the second sledge. The sledge, especially on that side on which the *armiyak* was hung up over the heads of the two drivers, was a quarter covered with snow, but behind the *armiyak* it was quiet and comfortable. The little old man was lying there with his legs stretched wide apart, and the tale-teller was going on with his tale: "At the very time when the general, in the King's name, you know, came, you know, to Mary in the dungeon, at that very time Mary said to him: General, I have no need of you and I cannot love you and, you know, you cannot be my lover, but my lover is the Prince himself.

"At that very time," he was going on, but perceiving me, he was silent for a moment and began to puff away at his pipe.

"What, sir, come to listen to the tale too?" said the other, whom I have called the Counsellor.

"You are having a rare fine time of it," said I. "It passes the time anyhow and prevents one from brooding."

"But tell me. do you know where we are now?"

The Snowstorm

This question did not appear to please the drivers.

"Where? Who can make that out? We may be going right away to the Calmucks," answered the Counsellor.

"But what shall we do then?"

"Do? We must go on, and perhaps we shall get through," said he surlily.

"And what if we don't get through, and the horses stop in the snow? What then?"

"What then? Why, nothing."

"We might be frozen."

"It's possible, certainly, for we cannot see any ricks, which means that we're going right into the Calmuck country. The first thing to do is to look at the snow."

"And aren't you at all afraid of being frozen?" asked the old man, with a tremulous voice.

Notwithstanding that he was making merry with me, it was plain that he was all of a tremble to the very last bone.

"Well, it's pretty cold," I said.

"Alas, for you, sir! If you were only like me; no, no, run along, that will make you warm."

"First of all, we ought to show him how to run after the sledge," said the Counsellor.

VII.

"Ready if you please," bawled Alec to me from the sledge in front.

The snowstorm was, so violent that only with the utmost exertion, bending right forward and grasping

More Tales from Tolstol

with both hands the folds of my mantle, was I able to traverse the few yards which separated me from the sledge, through the shifting snow, which the wind carried away from under my very feet. My former driver was already on his knees in the midst of the empty sledge, but seeing me, he took off his large hat, whereupon the wind furiously lifted his long locks on high, and he began asking me for *vodka*. He evidently didn't expect to get it, for he was not a bit offended at my refusal. He even thanked me, put on his hat, and said to me: "Well, God be with you, sir, and seizing the reins and smacking his lips, he departed from us immediately afterwards, Ignashka meanwhile waving his arms with all his might and shouting at his horses. Again the crunching of hoofs and the jangling of the little sledge bells superseded the whining of the wind, which was particularly audible whenever we stopped short.

For a quarter of an hour after the transfer I did not sleep, and amused myself by studying the figures of the new driver and the horses. Ignashka had all the ways of a young man; he was perpetually springing up, waving his arms, with his whip dangling over the horses, shouting at them, shifting from one foot to the other, bending forward from time to time, and readjusting the reins of the thill horse, which had a tendency perpetually to shift to the right. He was not big, but well put together apparently. Above his short pelisse he wore an ungirdled *armyak*, the collar of which was almost entirely thrown back, leaving the neck quite bare; his boots were not of felt but of leather, and his hat, which he was

The Snowstorm

incessantly doffing and setting right, was a smallish one. In all his movements was observable not merely energy, but, as it seemed to me, the longing to stimulate this energy. But the further we went and the more frequently he pulled himself together, and bounded on to the box-seat and fidgeted about with his feet and conversed with me and Alec, the more it seemed to me, that at the bottom of his soul he was sore afraid. And the reason was this: his horses were good, but at every step the road became more and more difficult, and it was obvious that the horses were running unwillingly; already it was necessary to whip them up a bit, and the thill horse, a good, big, shaggy beast, had stumbled once or twice, although, immediately afterwards, terror-stricken, it tore on ahead again, bowing its shaggy head almost lower than the very sledge bell. The right-hand-side horse, which I watched involuntarily, together with the long leather cluster of the reins, jolting and plunging on the field-side, was visibly breaking away from the traces and required a touch of the whip, but, as is the way with good horses, even when excited, as if sorry for his weakness, he angrily lowered and raised his head, again readjusting the bridle. It was really terrible to see how the snowstorm and the cold were increasing; how the horses were getting weaker. The road was become worse and worse, and we absolutely did not know where we were or whither we were going. We were no longer sure of reaching, I will not say a posting station, but even a place of refuge — and it was ridiculous and terrible to hear how the sledge-bell kept on tinkling so

More Tales from Tolstol

unconcernedly and merrily, and how Ignashka boisterously and bravely shouted at the horses as if we were rolling away to church on a hard-frozen, sunny, rustic road at midday on the "Feast of the Epiphany," and especially terrible it was to think that we were driving continually and driving rapidly nobody knew whither, right away from the place where we were. Ignashka began to sing some song or other, in a villainous falsetto indeed, but so sonorously and with such long pauses, during which he fell a-whistling, that it was strange to feel timid while you listened to him.

"Hie, hie! What a throat you've got, Ignat!" sounded the voice of the Counsellor; "do stop for a bit."

"What?"

"Sto-o-o-op!"

Ignat stopped. Again all was silent, and the wind howled and whined, and the whirling snow began to fall more thickly into the sledge. The Counsellor came to us.

"Well, what is it?"

"What, indeed! Whither are we going?"

"Who knows!"

"Our feet are frozen, eh! why are you clapping your hands?"

"We are quite benumbed."

"And as for you," this to Ignat, "just turn out and stir your stumps and see if there isn't a Calmuck encampment about here: it will warm up your feet a bit!"

"All right! hold the horses. Now for it."

The Snowstorm

And Ignat ran off in the direction indicated.

"One always ought to look out and pick one's way, you'll find it's all right ; and, besides, there's such a thing as foolish driving," said the Counsellor to me. "Just see how the horses are steaming."

All this time Ignat was gone, and this lasted so long that I was beginning to be afraid that he would lose himself altogether. The Counsellor, in the calmest, most self-confident tone of voice, explained to me how people ought to act in a snowstorm ; he said that the best thing of all was to outspan the horse and let her go right on, God only knows where, or sometimes it was possible to see and go by the stars, and he added that if he had gone on before as a pioneer, we should long ago have reached the station.

"Well, how is it ?" he asked Ignat, who could now be seen returning, walking with the utmost difficulty, being up to his knees in snow.

"Yes, it's there right enough. I can make out a Calmuck encampment," answered Ignat, puffing and blowing, "but which it is I don't know. We ought, my brother, to be going straight towards the Prolgovsky Manor House. We ought to go more to the left."

"But why this delay ? It must be those encampments of ours which are behind the post-station !" exclaimed the Counsellor.

"But I say it is not !"

"What I've seen I know : it'll be what I say and not the Tomushenko lot. We must keep going more to the right all along. We shall be out on the great bridge presently ; it is only eight versts off."

More Tales from Tolstol

"But I say it is not. I tell you I've just seen it," answered Ignat angrily.

"Ah, my brother, and you a driver too!"

"Driver be hanged! Go yourself!"

"Why should I go when I know already?"

It was plain that Ignat was very angry. Without answering, he leaped upon the box-seat and drove on further.

"You see how your feet grow numb if you don't warm them a bit," he said to Alec, continuing to hug his arms more and more frequently and wipe and shake off the snow which kept pouring into the leg of his boot.

I had a frightful desire to go to sleep.

VIII.

"Can it be possible that I am already freezing to death?" I thought in the midst of my slumbers. Freezing to death always begins during slumber, they say. Why, it would be better to be drowned than to freeze and let myself be drawn out in a net, yet 'tis all one whether I drown or freeze if only this stick—it seems to be a stick—were not beating against my back and I could lose consciousness.

And for a second or so I did lose consciousness.

"Yet, how will all this end?" I suddenly said within my mind, opening my eyes for a moment and glancing at the white expanse; "how will all this end if we do not find the ricks and the horses stop, which will happen pretty soon? We shall all be frozen." I confess that although a little afraid, the wish that

something extraordinary, something tragical, might happen to us was stronger within me than my tiny bit of fear. It seemed to me that it would not be half bad if, by the morning, the horses were to drag us into some distant, unknown village half frozen; or, better still, some of us perhaps might be frozen to death outright. And in this mood a vision presented itself before me, with extraordinary rapidity and vividness. The horses stopped; the snow heaps grew bigger and bigger, and now only the shaft-bow and the ears of the horses were visible; but suddenly Ignashka appeared on the surface with his *troika* and drove past us. We implored him with shrieks and yells to take us, but our cries were carried away by the wind, and there were no voices at all. Ignashka smoked slightly; shouted at his horses; whistled a bit, and vanished from our eyes into some deep abyss of drifted snow. Then the little old man leaped to the surface and began waving his arms, and wanted to spring off, but could not move from the spot; my old driver, with the large hat, flung himself upon him, dragged him to the ground, and trampled him in the snow. "You old sorcerer," he shrieked, "you curser; we'll sink or swim together." But the little old man burrowed in the snow drift with his head; he was not so much a little old man as a hare, and he slipped away from us. All the dogs came leaping after him. The counsellor, who was Theodor Filipovich, said that we should all sit round in a circle, and that it didn't matter a bit if the snow covered us, it would make us warm. And, indeed, we were very warm and

More Tales from Tolstol

comfortable, only we wanted something to drink. I got a case bottle, served out rum and sugar to them all, and drank myself with great satisfaction. The tale-teller was telling some tale about the rainbow—and above us, indeed, was a ceiling of snow and rainbow. "And now let each of us take his apartment in the snow and go to sleep," said I. The snow was warm and soft like fur. I made a room for myself, and was about to go into it, but Theodor Filipovich, who saw some money in my case bottle, said: "Stop, give me the money; it's all one if we die!" and caught me by the leg. I gave him the money, merely asking them to let me out; but they would not believe it was all the money I had, and wanted to kill me. I caught the arm of the old man and, with unspeakable delight, began to kiss it. The arm of the little old man was fresh and smooth. At first he tore it away from me, but afterwards he let me have it, and even began caressing me with the other arm. But Theodor Filipovich drew near and threatened me. I ran into my room, but it was not a room, but a long white corridor, and something held me by the leg. I tore myself away, but in the hands of him who held me remained my clothing and part of my skin; but I only felt cold and bashful, and all the more bashful because my aunt, with her sunshade, and with her homœopathic pharmacopœia under her arm, was coming towards me with the drowned man. They were laughing, and did not understand the signs I was making to them. I threw myself into the sledge, and my feet were dragging along the snow; but the

The Snowstorm

little old man pursued me, waving his arms. The little old man was already close to me when I heard two little bells, and knew that I was safe if I could get to them. The little bells sounded more and more violently, but the little old man caught me up, and fell like a beast on my face, so that the bells were scarce audible. I again seized his arm and began to kiss it, but the little old man was not the little old man, but the man who had been drowned, and he cried out: "Stop, Ignashka, these are the Akhmetkin ricks, I think; go and see!"

This was too terrible; far better to wake up! I opened my eyes. The wind had flapped my face with the corner of Alec's mantle; my knee was uncovered; we were going over a bare, frozen crest of snow, and the *tierce* of the little bells was very faintly audible in the air, along with the jangling *quinte*.

I looked to see where the rick was, but instead of the ricks, I saw with my wide-open eyes a house with a balcony and the crenelated wall of a fortress. It interested me very little to look at this house and fortress; my chief desire was to see again the white corridor along which I had run to hear the sound of the church bell, and to kiss the hand of the old man. I again closed my eyes and went to sleep.

IX.

I slept deeply; but the *tierce* of the bell was audible the whole time, and there appeared to me in my dreams, sometimes in the shape of a dog, which

More Tales from Tolstol

barked and fell upon me ; and sometimes as an organ, in which I was one of the pipes ; sometimes the shape of French verses which I was composing. Sometimes it seemed to me as if this *tierce* was some instrument of torture continually squeezing my right heel. This was so violent that I woke, and opened my eyes, rubbing my foot. It was beginning to be frost-bitten. The night was just the same as before—bright. The selfsame sort of movement was jolting me and the sledge ; the selfsame Ignashka was sitting on the box-seat and shuffling about with his feet ; the selfsame side horse, distending its neck and scarce lifting its feet, was trotting along over the deep snow ; the little tassel of the harness was jumping up and down, and lashing the belly of the horse. The head of the thill horse, with dishevelled mane, the distended and loosening harness attached to the shaft-bow, was gently rocking up and down. But all this, far more than before, was covered, was loaded with snow. The snow came whirling down from in front, and sideways, was beginning to cover up the sledge-boards ; the legs of the horses were up to their knees in snow, and the snow was pouring down from above upon our collars and hats. The wind was now from the right, and now from the left, and played with our collars, with the flap of Ignashka's *armyak*, and with the mane of the thill horse, and howled above the shaft-bow and in the shafts.

It had become frightfully cold ; and scarcely had I wriggled myself free of my collar, than the frozen, dry snow, whirling along, fell full upon my eye-

The Snowstorm

lashes, nose, mouth, and flopped down my neck. All round about everything was white, bright, and snowy; there was nothing to be seen anywhere but turbid light and snow. I became seriously alarmed. Aleshka was asleep at my feet in the very bottom of the sledge, the whole of his back was covered by a thick layer of snow. Ignashka I did not see; he was tugging at the reins, shouting to the horses, and shuffling with his feet perpetually. The little bell sounded as strangely as ever. The horses kept snorting, yet on they ran, stumbling more and more frequently, and somewhat more softly. Ignashka again leaped up, waved his sleeves, and began singing his song in a thin, tense voice. Without finishing it he stopped the *troika*, threw the reins on to the upper part of the sledge, and dismounted. The wind was howling furiously, the snow, pouring down as if from a sieve, covered the skirt of his *pèlisse*. I looked around, the third *troika* was no longer behind us, it had stopped somewhere. Round the second *troika*, which was visible through a snowy mist, I could see how the little old man was hopping about from foot to foot. Ignashka took three steps away from the sledge, sat down in the snow, ungirded himself, and set about taking off his shoes.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I must change my boots, my feet are quite frozen," he answered, continuing what he was doing.

It had made me cold merely to wriggle my neck free of my collar. I could not bear to look on and see him do this. I sat stiff and upright, looking at the side

More Tales from Tolstoi

horse which, drawing back its feet, began wearily, like a sick thing, twitching its tucked-up tail all covered with snow. The jolt which Ignat had given to the sledge, when he leaped upon the sledge-ledge, had awakened me.

"I say, where are we now?" I asked; "shall we ever get anywhere?"

"Be easy, we shall manage it," he answered; "the great thing is to keep the feet warm. That's why I've changed my boots."

And off he started. The little bell sounded, the sledge again began to swing along, and the wind whistled beneath the curved sides of the sledge. And once more we set off swimming in a limitless sea of snow.

X.

I slept soundly. When Alec, knocking me with his foot, awoke me, and I opened my eyes, it was already morning. It appeared to me to be colder than in the night. No snow was coming down from above; but a strong, dry wind continued to carry the snow-dust across the plain and especially beneath the hoofs of the horses and the sledge-curves. The sky, to the right, in the east, was heavy and of a dark bluish colour; but bright, orange-red, strips were becoming more and more plainly distinguishable in it. Above our heads, from behind the fugitive, white, faintly tinted clouds, a pale blue was revealing itself; to the left, the masses of cloud were bright, light, and mobile. All around,

The Snowstorm

as far as the eye could reach, lay white, deep snow, distributed in heaps and layers. In one direction could be seen a greyish heap, over which a fine, dry, snowy dust was doggedly flying. Not a single trace of a sledge, or a human being, or an animal was anywhere visible. The outlines and colours of the back of the driver and the horses showed out clearly, and even sharply, against the white background. The rim of Ignashka's dark blue hat, his collar, his hair, and even his boots were white. The sledges were completely covered. The whole right part of the head of the dark grey thill horse and his forelock were covered with snow; my side horse was enwrapped in it up to the knees, and his sweating body was all plastered with snowy festoons on the right side. The tassel was still bobbing up and down as before, beating time to some unimaginable *motif*, and the side horse was running along just as before, only she had sunk lower in the snow, from which she raised and disengaged her body from time to time. It was plain from her dejected ears what she must be suffering. Only a single new object riveted our attention, and this was a verst post, from which the snow was being strewn on the ground, around which the wind had piled a whole hillock of snow to the right, and was still tearing up and casting the scattering snow from one side to the other. I was amazed that we had been driving along the whole night with single horses for twenty hours, not knowing whither, and without stopping, and yet had managed somehow to arrive. Our little bell was sounding more merrily than ever. Ignat wrapped

More Tales from Tolstoi

himself up tighter, and kept shouting at the horses ; behind us neighed the horses and jingled the bells of the *troika* of the little old man and the counsellor ; but the sleeper must have parted from us in the steppe. After going along for another half verst we came upon the recent track of a sledge and *troika*, lightly powdered with snow, and, at rare intervals, pink patches of the blood of a horse which, as we could see, had been cruelly whipped.

"That is Philip. It is plain that he has got in before us !" said Ignashka.

But there stood a little house with a signboard alone on the road, in the midst of the snow, which reached almost up to the roof and windows. Near the inn stood a *troika* of three grey horses, crisp with sweat, with disengaged feet and dejected heads. Around the door the snow had been cleared away, and there stood a shovel, but from the roof the howling wind was still sweeping and whirling the snow.

From out of the door, at the sound of our bells, emerged a big, good-looking, red-faced driver with a glass of wine in his hand, shouting something. Ignashka turned to me and asked permission to stop. Then for the first time I saw his face.

XI.

His face was not darkish, dry, and straight-nosed, as I had expected, judging from his hair and physique. It was a round, merry, absolutely sun-burnt face, with a large mouth and brightly shining,

The Snowstorm

round blue eyes. His cheeks and neck were as red as rubbed rags; his eyebrows, long eye-lashes, and the hair symmetrically covering the lower part of his face, were clotted with snow and quite white. It was only half a verst to the station, and we stopped.

"Only be as quick as you can," I said.

"In one moment," answered Ignashka, and leaping from the box-seat, he ran to Philip.

"Give it here, my brother," taking off his glove and pitching it in the snow along with his whip, and, throwing back his head, he swallowed the proffered dram of *vodka* at a single gulp.

The innkeeper, most probably a discharged Cossack, came out of the door with a demi-stoop in his hand.

"Who's to have it?" said he.

Tall Vas-il-y, a leanish, red-bearded muzhik, with a goatee beard, and the counsellor, a stout, white eye-browed fellow, with a thick white beard framing his red face, both came up and had a glass or two. The little old man would also have liked to have joined the group of drinkers, but he was not invited to have a dram, and he went to his horses, which were tied up behind the *troika*, and began to stroke them on the back and buttocks. The little old man was just as I had imagined him, a thin, little fellow with a wrinkled, bluish face, a sparse beard, a sharp nose, and stumpy yellow teeth. He wore a driver's hat, which was quite new, but his meagre little demi-pelisse, threadbare, stained with tar and torn at the shoulder and sides, did not cover his knees, and his hempen lower garment was stuffed into his huge felt

More Tales from Tolstol

boots. He was all bent and wrinkled, and his face and knees were quivering ; he was busying himself about the sledge, with the obvious endeavour of getting warm.

"Hillo, Matvich ! why don't you have a half pint ? fine thing for making you wärm !" said the counsellor.

Matvich persisted in what he was doing. He put the harness of his horses to rights, put the low shaft right also and came to me.

"Look here, sir !" said he, taking his hat from off his grey hairs and bowing low, "all night long we've been wandering about with you, seeking the road ; if only now you would stand a half pint. Yes, indeed, little father, your excellency ! And there's nothing like that for warming one," he added with an obsequious smile.

I gave him a quarter-rouble. The innkeeper brought out a half-pint and handed it to the little old man. He drew off the whip-glove and extended a small, dark, crooked and slightly bluish hand towards the glass ; but his thumb, which looked like some one else's, refused to obey him ; he could not hold the glass, and, spilling the *vodka*, cast it upon the snow.

All the drivers began to laugh.

"Just look, Matvich is so frost-bitten that he cannot hold his wine."

But Matvich was very angry that the wine was spilled. However, they filled him another glass and poured it into his mouth. Immediately he became very lively and merry, ran into the inn, lighted his pipe, began to simper, and show his worn, yellow

The Snowstorm

teeth, and uttered an oath at every word. After drinking a final dram, the drivers dispersed to their various *troikas* and we proceeded. The snow was just as white and glaring as ever, so that it stung the eye that gazed at it. The orange and reddish strips of 'cloud, mounting' higher and 'higher, and growing ever brighter and brighter, spread over the sky ; 'even the red sphere of the sun appeared on the horizon in the midst of dove-coloured clouds, the azure of the sky grew ever more dazzling and deeper. On the road, near the posting station, the track was clear, precise, and yellowish ; here and there were holes ; in the frozen, compressed air there was a sensation of pleasant lightness and freshness. My *troika* ran very swiftly. The head of the thill horse and her neck, with the mane spread widely over the shaft-bow, bobbed rapidly up and down, almost in one place ; beneath sounded the pleasant bells whose tongues no longer beat, but rubbed against their sides. The good side horses, tugging together at the congealed and crooked reins, energetically bounded forward ; the tassels kept bumping away beneath their very bellies and hindmost harness. Occasionally the side horse would stumble into one of the holes in the dilapidated road, and, with its eyes full of snow-dust, would struggle briskly out of it again. Ignashka now shouted to his horses in a merry tenor ; the dry frost crackled beneath the sides of the sledges ; from behind us came the solemnly sonorous sounds of two sledge-bells and the drunken shouting of the drivers. I glanced back, the grey, shaggy side horses, extending their necks, and breathing methodically,

More Tales from Tolstoi

with curving bits, were bounding over the snow. Philip shaking his whip, was adjusting his hat; the little old man, with drawn up legs, was lying at full length, just as before, in the middle sledge.

In two minutes the sledge began to grate upon the well-swept boards of the approach to the post-office station, and Ignashka turned towards me his snow-covered, merry, weather-beaten face.

"We've arrived, you see, sir!" said he.

II.—THE CAPTIVE IN THE CAUCASUS

I

A GENTLEMAN of the name of Zhilin was serving in the Caucasus as an officer. One day he received a letter from home. His aged mother wrote to him : " I am growing old and should like to see my dear little son before I die. Come to me, I pray you, if it be only to bury me, and then in God's name enter the service again. And I have found for you a nice bride besides ; she is sensible, good, and has property. You may fall in love with her perhaps, and you may marry her and be able to retire."

Zhilin fell a musing : " Yes, indeed, the old lady has been ailing lately, she might never live to see me. Yes, I'll go, and if the girl is nice I may marry her into the bargain."

So he went to his colonel, obtained leave of absence, took leave of his comrades, gave his soldiers four pitchers of vodka to drink his health, and prepared to be off.

There was war in the Caucasus then. The roads were impassable night and day. Scarce any of the Russians could go in or out of the fortress, but the Tatars would kill them or carry them off into the

More Tales from Tolstoi

mountains. So it was commanded that twice a week a military escort should proceed from fortress to fortress with the people in the midst of it.

The affair happened in the summer. At dawn of day the baggage-wagons assembled in the fortress, the military escort marched out, and the whole company took the road. Zhilin went on horseback, and his wagon with his things was among the baggage.

The distance to be traversed was twenty miles, but the caravan moved but slowly. Sometimes it was the soldiers who stopped, sometimes a wheel flew off one of the baggage-wagons, or a horse wouldn't go—and then they had all to stop and wait.

The sun had already passed the meridian, and the caravan had only gone half the distance. There was nothing but heat and dust, the sun regularly burned, and there was no shelter to be had. All around nothing but the naked steppe—not a village, not a wayside bush.

Zhilin had galloped on in front, he had now stopped, and was waiting for the cavalcade to come up. Then he heard a horn blown in the rear, and knew that they had stopped again. Then thought Zhilin: "Why not go on by oneself without the soldiers? I've a good horse beneath me, and if I stumble upon the Tatars—I can make a bolt for it. Or shall I not go?"

He stood there considering, and up there came trotting another mounted officer, called Kostuilin, with a musket, and he said:

"Let us go on alone, Zhilin. I can't stand it any longer, I want some grub; the heat is stifling, and my shirt is regularly sticking to me."

The Captive In the Caucasus

This Kostuïlin, by the way, was a thick, heavy, red-faced man, and the sweat was pouring from him. Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said :

"Is your musket loaded?"

"Yes, it is loaded."

"Well, we'll go, but on one condition—we must keep together."

And they cantered on in front along the road. They went through the steppe, and as they chatted together they kept glancing on every side of them. They could see for a great distance around them.

The steppe at last had come to an end, and the way lay towards a ravine between two mountains.

"What are you looking at? Let us go straight on!" said Kostuïlin. But Zhilin did not listen to him.

"No," said he, "you just wait below and I'll go up and have a look round."

And he urged his horse to the left up the mountain. The horse beneath Zhilin was a good hunter (he had bought it from the horse-fold while still a foal for a hundred roubles, and had broken it in himself), it carried him up the steep ascent as if on wings. He needed but a single glance around—there right in front of them, not a furlong ahead, was a whole heap of Tatars, thirty men at least. He no sooner saw them than he set about turning, but the Tatars had seen him too, and posted after him, drawing their muskets while in full career. Zhilin galloped down the slope as fast as his horse's legs could carry him, at the same time shouting to Kostuïlin:

"Out with the muskets! And you, my beauty"—

More Tales from Tolstol

he was thinking of his horse—"you, my beauty, spread yourself out and don't knock your foot against anything, for if you stumble now we're lost. Let me but get to my musket, and I'm hanged if I surrender."

But Kostuilin, instead of waiting, bolted off at full speed in the direction of the fortress as soon as he beheld the Tatars. He lashed his horse first on one side and then on the other. Only the strong sweep of her tail was visible in the dust.

Zhilin perceived that he was in a bit of a hole. His musket was gone, and with a simple *shashka** nothing could be done. He drove his horse on in the direction of the Russian soldiers—there was just a chance of getting away. He saw that six of them were galloping away to cut him off. He had a good horse under him, but they had still better, and they were racing their hardest to bar his way. He began to hesitate, wanted to turn in another direction, but his horse had lost her head, he couldn't control her, and she was rushing right upon them. He saw approaching him on a grey horse a Tatar with a red beard. The Tatar uttered a shrill cry, gnashed his teeth, and his musket was all ready.

"Well," thought Zhilin, "I know what you are, you devils, if you take me alive you'll put me in a dungeon and whip me. I'll not be taken alive."

Zhilin was small of stature, but he was brave. Drawing his *shashka*, he urged his horse straight upon the red-bearded Tatar, thinking to himself: "I'll

* A Circassian sabre.

The Captive in the Caucasus

either ride down his horse or fell him with my *shashka*."

But Zhilin never got up to the Tatar horse. They fired upon him from behind with their muskets and attacked *his* horse. His horse fell to the ground with a crash, and Zhilin was thrown off her back. He tried to rise, but two strong-smelling Tatars were already sitting upon him and twisting his arms behind his back. He writhed and twisted and threw off the Tatars, but then three more leaped off their horses and sprang upon him, and began beating him about the head with the butt-ends of their muskets. It grew dark before his eyes, and he began to feel faint. Then the Tatars seized him, rifled his saddle-bags, fastened his arms behind his back, tying them with a Tatar knot, and dragged him to the saddle. They snatched off his hat, they pulled off his boots, examined everything, extorted his money and his watch, and ripped up all his clothes. Zhilin glanced at his horse. She, his dearly-beloved comrade, lay just as she had fallen, on her back, with kicking feet which vainly tried to reach the ground. There was a hole in her head, and out of this hole the black blood gushed with a hiss—for several yards around the dust was wet.

One of the Tatars went to the horse and proceeded to take the saddle from her back. She went on kicking all the time, and he threw forth a knife and cut her windpipe. There was a hissing sound from her throat, she shivered all over, and the breath of her life was gone.

The Tatars took away the saddle and bridle. The Tatar with the red beard mounted his horse and

More Tales from Tolstol

the others put Zhilin up behind him. To prevent him falling off they fastened him by a thong to the Tatar's belt and led him away into the mountains.

So there sat Zhilin behind the Tatar, and at every moment he was jolted against, and his very nose came in contact with the Tatar's malodorous back. All that he could see in front of him, indeed, was the sturdy Tatar's back, his sinewy, shaven neck sticking out all bluish from beneath his hat. Zhilin's head was all battered, and the blood kept trickling into his eyes. And it was impossible for him to right himself on his horse or wipe away the blood. His arms were twisted so tightly that his very collar-bone was in danger of breaking.

They travelled for a long time from mountain to mountain, crossed a ford, diverged from the road, and entered a ravine.

Zhilin would have liked to have marked the road by which they were taking him, but his eyes were clotted with blood and he couldn't turn round properly.

It began to grow dark. They crossed yet another river and began to ascend a rocky mountain, and then came a smell of smoke and the barking of dogs!

At last they came to the *aul* or Tatar village. The Tatars dismounted from their horses and a crowd of Tatar children assembled, who surrounded Zhilin, fell a yelling and making merry, and took up stones to cast at him.

The Tatar drove away the children, took Zhilin from his horse, and called a workman. Up came a hatchet-

The Captive in the Caucasus

faced *Nogaets*,* clad only in a shirt, and as the shirt was torn the whole of his breast was bare. The Tatar gave some orders to him. The workman brought a *kolodka*, that is to say, two oaken blocks fastened together by iron rings, and in one of the rings a cramping iron and a lock. Then they undid Zhilin's hands, attached the *kolodka* to his feet, led him into an outhouse, thrust him into it, and fastened the door. Zhilin fell upon a dung-heap. For a time he lay where he fell, then he fumbled his way in the dark to the softest place he could find, and lay down there.

II.

Zhilin scarcely slept at all during the night. It was the season of short nights. He could see it growing light through a rift in the wall. Zhilin arose, made the rift a little bigger, and looked out.

Through the rift the high road was visible going down the mountain-side, to the right was a Tatar *saklya*,† with two villages beside it. A black dog lay upon the threshold, a goat with her kids passed along whisking their tails. He saw a Tatar milkmaid coming down from the mountains in a flowered-belted blouse, trousers and boots, with her head covered by a kaftan, and on her head a large tin *kuvsain*‡ full of water. She walked with curved back and head bent forward, and led by the hand a little closely cropped Tatar boy in a little shirt.

* A Tatar of the Nogai tribe.

† A mountain hut in the Caucasus.

‡ An earthen, bulging pitcher, with a narrow neck and a handle.

More Tales from Tolstol

The Tatar girl took the water to the *saklya*, and out came the Tatar of yesterday evening, with the red beard, in a silken *beskmet*,* with slippers on his naked feet and a silver knife in his leather girdle. On his head he wore a lofty, black sheepskin hat, flattened down behind. 'He came out, stretched himself, and stroked his bountiful red beard. He stayed there for a while, gave some orders to his labourer, and went off somewhither.

Next there passed by two children on horses which they had just watered. The horses' nozzles were wet. Then some more closely cropped youngsters ran by in nothing but shirts, without hose, and they collected into a group, went to the outhouse, took up a long twig and thrust it through the rift in the wall. Zhilin gave such a shout at them that the children screamed in chorus and took to their heels, a gleam of naked little knees was the last that was seen of them.

But Zhilin wanted drink, his throat was parched and dry. "If only they would come to examine me," thought he. He listened—they were opening the outhouse. The red-bearded Tatar appeared, and with him came another, smaller in stature, a blackish sort of little man. His eyes were bright and black, he was ruddy and had a small cropped beard, his face was merry, he was all smiles. The swarthy man was dressed even better than the other; his silken *beskmet* was blue and trimmed with galoon, the large dagger in his belt was of silver, his red morocco slippers were also trimmed with silver. Moreover,

f * A Tatar under-tunic.

The Captive in the Caucasus

thick outer slippers covered the finer inner ones. He wore a lofty hat of white lamb's-wool.

The red-bearded Tatar came in and there was some conversation, and, apparently a dispute began. He lent his elbows on the gate, fingered his hanger, and glanced furtively at Zhilin like a hungry wolf. But the swarthy man—he was a quick, lively fellow, who seemed to move upon springs—came straight up to Zhilin, sat down on his heels, grinned, showing all his teeth, patted him on the shoulder, and began to jabber something in a peculiar way of his own, blinking his eyes, clicking with his tongue, and saying repeatedly:

“Korosho urus! Korosho urus!”*

Zhilin did not understand a word of it, and all he said was:

“I am thirsty, give me a drink of water!”

The swarthy man laughed. “Korosho urus!” he said again—babbling away in his own peculiar manner.

Zhilin tried to make them understand by a pantomime with his hands and lips that he wanted something to drink.

The swarthy man understood at last, went out and called:

“Dipa! Dina!”

A very thin, slender girl, about thirteen years of age, with a face very like the swarthy man's, then appeared. Plainly she was the swarthy man's daughter. She also had black sparkling eyes and

* *I.e.*—“Khorosho russ” = fine Russian man.

More Tales from Tolstoi

a ruddy complexion. She was dressed in a long blue blouse with white sleeves and without a girdle. The folds, sleeves, and breast of her garment were beautifully trimmed. She also wore trousers and slippers, and the inner slippers were protected by outer slippers with high heels. Round her neck she wore a necklace of Russian *poltiniks*.^{*} Her head was uncovered, her hair was black, and in her hair was a ribbon, from which dangled a metallic plaque and a silver rouble.

Her father gave her some orders. She ran out, and returned again immediately with a tin *kuvshinchik*.[†] She handed the water to Zhilin herself, plumping down on her heels, bending right forward so that her shoulders were lower than her knees. There she sat, staring at Zhilin with wide-open eyes as he drank, just as if he were some wild animal.

Zhilin gave the *kuvshinchik* back to her, and back she bounded like a wild goat. Even her father couldn't help laughing. Then he sent her somewhere or other. She took the *kuvshinchik*, ran off, and came back with some unleavened bread on a little round platter, and again she crouched down, all humped forward, gazing at Zhilin with all her eyes.

Then all the Tatars went out and closed the door behind them.

After a little while the Nogaets came to Zhilin and said:

"Come along, master! come along!"

He also did not know Russian. It was plain to

^{*} Half-roubles. [†] A small kuvship. See preceding note.

The Captive in the Caucasus

Zhilin, however, that he was ordering him to come somewhither.

Zhilin followed him, still wearing the *kolodka*. He limped all the way, to walk was impossible, as he had constantly to twist his foot to one side. So Zhilin followed the *Nogaets* outside. He saw the Tatar village—ten houses, with their mosque which had a tower. Before one house stood three saddled horses. A tiny boy was holding their bridles. All at once the swarthy man came leaping out of his house, and waved his hand to Zhilin to signify to him to approach. The Tatar was smiling, jabbering after his fashion, and quickly disappeared into the house again. Zhilin entered the house. The living-room was a good one, the walls were of smoothly-polished clay. Variegated pillows were piled up against the front wall, rich carpets hung up at the entrance on each side; arms of various sorts—pistols, *shashki*, all of silver—were hanging on the carpets. In one corner was a little stove level with the ground. The earthen floor was as clean as a threshing-floor, the front corner was all covered with felt, on the felt were carpets, and on the carpets soft cushions. And on the carpets, in nothing but their *bashmaks*,* sat the Tatars—there were five of them, the red-bearded man, the swarthy man, and three guests. Soft bulging cushions had been placed behind the backs of them all, and in front of them, on a small platter, were boltered pan cakes, beef distributed in little cups, and the Tatar beverage—*buzat*†—in a *kuvshinchik*. They ate with their hands, and all their hands were in the meat.

* Slippers. † A drink made from buck-wheat and oatmeal.

More Tales from Tolstol

The swarthy man leaped to his feet, and bade Zhilin sit down apart, not on the carpet, but on the bare floor; then he went back to his carpet, and regaled his guests with pancakes and *buzza*. The labourer made Zhilin sit down in the place assigned to him, he himself took off his outer *bashmaks*, placed them side by side at the door, where the other *bashmaks* stood, then sat down on the felt nearer to his masters; he watched how they ate, and his mouth watered as he wiped it. When the Tatars had eaten the pancakes, a Tatar woman appeared in just the same sort of blouse that the girl had worn, and in trousers also; her head was covered with a cloth.

She took away the meat and the pancakes, and brought round a good washing vessel, and a *kuvshin* with a very narrow spout. The Tatars then began washing their hands, then they folded their arms, squatted down on their knees, belched in every direction, and recited prayers. Then they talked among themselves. Finally, one of the guests turned towards Zhilin, and began to speak in Russian.

"Kazi Muhammed took thee," said he, pointing to the red-bearded Tatar, "and has sold thee to Abdul Murad," and he indicated the swarthy Tatar. "Abdul Murad is now thy master."

Zhilin was silent.

Then Abdul Murad began to speak, and kept on pointing at Zhilin, and laughed and said, several times, "Soldat urus! Korosho urus!"*

The interpreter said:

* The Russian Soldier. The fine Russian.

The Captive in the Caucasus

"He bids thee write a letter home in order that they may send a ransom for thee. As soon as they send the money, thou shalt be set free."

Zhilin thought for a moment, and then said :

"How much ransom does he require?"

The Tatars talked among themselves, and then the interpreter said :

"Three thousand moneys."

"No," said Zhilin, "I cannot pay that."

Abdul started up and began waving his hands, and said something to Zhilin—they all thought he understood. The interpreter interpreted, saying :

"How much wilt thou give?"

Zhilin reflected, and then said, "Five hundred roubles."

At this the Tatars chattered a great deal and all together. Abdul began to screech at the red-bearded Tatar, and got so excited that the spittle trickled from his mouth. The red-bearded Tatar only blinked his eyes and clicked with his tongue.

Then they were silent again, and the interpreter said :

"Thy master thinks a ransom of five hundred roubles too little. He himself paid two hundred roubles for thee. Kazi Muhammed owed him that and he took thee in discharge of the debt. Three thousand roubles is the least they will let thee go for. And if thou dost not write they will put thee in the dungeon and punish thee with scourging."

"What am I to do with them? this is even worse than I thought," said Zhilin to himself. Then he leaped to his feet and said,

More Tales from Tolstol

"Tell him, thou dog, that if he wants to frighten me, I won't give him a kopeck, neither will I write at all. I have never feared, and I will not fear you now, you dog."

The interpreter interpreted, and again they all began talking at once.

For a long time they debated, and then the swarthy man leaped to his feet and came to Zhilin.

"Urus!" said he, "dzhiget, dzhiget urus!"—and then he laughed.

"Dzhiget" in their language signifies "youth."

Then he said something to the interpreter, and the interpreter said: "Give a thousand roubles!"

Zhilin stood to his guns. "More than five hundred I will not give," said he. "You may kill me if you like, but you'll get no more out of me."

The Tatars fell a talking together again, then they sent out the labourer for someone, and kept looking at the door and at Zhilin. Presently the workman came back and brought with him a man—stout, bare-legged, and cheery-looking, he also had a *kolodka* fastened to his leg.

Then Zhilin sighed indeed, for he recognised Kostuulin. So they had taken him too then! The Tatars placed them side by side, they began talking to each other, and the Tatars were silent and looked on. Zhilin related how it had fared with him, Kostuulin told him that his horse had sunk under him, that his musket had missed fire, and that that selfsame Abdul had chased and captured him.

Abdul leaped to his feet, pointed at Kostuulin, and said something. The interpreter interpreted that

The Captive in the Caucasus

they both of them had now one master, and whichever of them paid up first should be released first.

"Look now," said he to Zhilin, "thou makest such a to do, but thy comrade takes it quietly; he has written a letter home telling them to send five thousand roubles. Look now! he shall be fed well and shall be respected."

"My comrade can do as he likes," said Zhilin, "no doubt he is rich, but I am not rich. What I have said that will I do. You may kill me if you like, but you will get little profit out of that—I will not write for more than five hundred roubles."

They were silent for a while. Suddenly Abdul leaped up and produced a small coffer, took out a ~~pen, a~~ piece of paper and ink, forced them upon Zhilin, tapped him on the shoulder, and, pointing to them, said: "Write!" He had agreed to take five hundred roubles.

"Wait a bit," said Zhilin to the interpreter; "tell him that he must feed us well, clothe and shoe us decently, and let us be together—we shall be happier then—and take off the *kolodka*." He himself then looked at his master and laughed. And his master laughed likewise. He heard the interpreter out, and then said: "I will give you the best of clothing, a Circassian costume and good boots—you might be married in them. And I'll feed you like princes. And if you want to dwell together—well, you can dwell in the outhouse. I can't take off the *kolodka*—you would run away. Only at night can I take it off." Then he rushed forward and tapped him on the shoulder—"Thy good is my good!" said he.

More Tales from Tolstol

Then Zhilin wrote the letter, and he wrote no address on the letter, so that it should not go. But he thought to himself:

"I'll run away."

Then they led away Zhilin and Kostuulin to the outhouse, brought them maize-straw to spread on the ground, water in a *kuvshin*, bread, two old Circassian costumes, and two pairs of tattered military boots. They had plainly been taken from off the feet of slain soldiers. At night they took off their *kolodki* and fastened the door.

III.

Zhilin and his comrade lived there for a whole month. And Zhilin's master was as radiant as ever. "Ivan," he would say laughing, "thy good is my good—Abdul's good." They were badly fed all the same, getting nothing but unleavened bread, made from indifferent meal, and tough and doughy hearth-cakes.

Kostuulin wrote home once more, and waited for the money to be sent, in utter weariness. The whole day they sat in the outhouse and counted the days it would take the letter to arrive, or else they slept. Zhilin, however, knew very well that his letter would not arrive, and he did not write another.

"Where I should like to know," thought he, "would my mother be able to scrape together so much money to pay me out? It was as much as she could do to live on what I sent her. If he had to collect five

The Captive In the Caucasus

hundred roubles she would come to grief altogether. With God's help, I'll get out of this hobble myself."

So he looked carefully about and devised every possible method of escaping. He would go about the *aul* whistling, or he would sit down here and there and manufacture various sorts of little things, or model a puppet out of clay, or weave baskets from twigs. For Zhilin was a master at all sorts of handiwork.

Once he modelled a puppet with a nose, arms, and legs in a Tatar shirt, and put this puppet on the roof of the outhouse.

Presently the Tatar women came out to draw water. Dinka, the daughter of the house, saw the puppet and called the Tatar women to look at it. They put down their *kuvshini*, looked at it long and laughed aloud. Zhilin took up the puppet and offered it to them. They laughed still more, but were afraid to take it. So he put the puppet on the roof, went into the outhouse, and watched to see what would happen.

Dina then came running up, glanced all around, seized the puppet, and ran away with it.

Next morning at dawn he saw Dina across the threshold with the puppet. She had already adorned the puppet with all sorts of parti-coloured rags, and was rocking it as if it were a child, singing a lullaby of her own invention. Then the old woman came out and scolded her, snatched away the puppet, smashed it, and sent Dina off to work somewhere.

Then Zhilin made another and even better puppet and gave it to Dina. Presently Dina came again, bringing with her a little pitcher which she put on

More Tales from Tolstoi

the floor, and then sat down and looked at Zhilin, and smiling all over, kept pointing at the pitcher.

"Why is she so delighted?" thought Zhilin. Then he took up the pitcher and began to drink. He thought it was water, but it was milk. He drank all the milk. "Khorosho!"* said he. How rejoiced Dina was then!

"Khorosho, Ivan, Khorosho," she repeated, and leaping to her feet, she clapped her hands, snatched up the pitcher, and ran off.

And from thenceforth she, every day, brought him some milk privately. Now the Tatars used to make cheese-cakes out of goats' milk and dried them on their roofs, and these cheese-cakes she also supplied him with secretly. And once, when the master of the house slaughtered a sheep, she brought him a bit of mutton in her sleeve, flung it down before him and ran off.

Occasionally there were heavy storms, and the rain poured down for a whole hour as if out of a bucket, and all the streams "grew turbid and overflowed. Where there had been a ford there was then three *arshins*† of water, and the stones were whirled from their places. Streams then flowed everywhere, and there was a distant roar in the mountains. And so when the storm had passed over, the whole village was full of watercourses. After one of these storms Zhilin asked his master to lend him a knife, carved out a little cylinder and a little board, attached a wheel to them, and fastened a puppet at each end of the wheel.

* Good. † An *arshin* is a Russian ell.

The Captive In the Caucasus

The girls thereupon brought him rags, and he dressed up one of his puppets as a man and the other as a woman, fastened them well in, and placed the wheel in the stream, whereupon the wheel turned and the puppets leaped up and down.

The whole village assembled to look at them. The little boys came, and the little girls and the women, and at last the Tatars themselves, and they clicked their tongues and said: "Aye! Urus! aye, Ivan!"

Now Abdul had some broken Russian watches. He called Zhilin, pointed at these watches, and clicked with his tongue. Zhilin said:

"Give them to me, and I'll repair them!"

He took them to pieces with the help of his knife, examined them, put them together again, and returned them to their owner. The watches were now going.

Zhilin's master was greatly delighted at this, and brought him his old *besmet*, which was all in rags, and gave it to him to mend. What could Zhilin do but take and mend it—and the same night its owner was able to cover himself with it.

From henceforth Zhilin had the reputation of a master-craftsman. The people used now to come to him from distant villages; one sent his matchlock or his pistol to Zhilin to be mended, another sent his watch or clock. His master even gave him various utensils to mend, such as snuffers, gimlets, and other things.

Once one of the Tatars fell ill, and they sent for Zhilin to see him.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Come and cure him!" said they.

Now Zhilin knew nothing at all about curing. Nevertheless, he went, looked at the man, and thought: "Who knows, perhaps he may get well by himself!" So he went back to the outhouse, got water and sand, and mixed them both together. Then he whispered something over the water in the Tatar's presence and gave him the mixture to drink. Fortunately for him the Tatar recovered. Then Zhilin began to stand very high indeed in their opinion. And these Tatars, who had got used to him, used to cry, "Ivan! Ivan!" whenever they wanted him, and all of them treated him as if he were some pet domestic animal.

But the red-bearded Tatar did not like Zhilin. Whenever he saw him he would frown and turn away, even if he didn't scold him outright. Now these Tatars had an old chief who did not live in the *aul* but up in the mountains. The only time when he saw Zhilin was when he came to pray to God in the mosque. He was small in stature, and a white handkerchief was always wound around his turban, his beard and moustaches were clipped short and as white as down, his face was red like a brick and wrinkled. He had the curved nose of a vulture, grey evil eyes, and no teeth, except a couple of fangs. He used to come in his turban, leaning on his crutch, and glaring about him like an old wolf. Whenever he saw Zhilin he began to snarl and turned away.

Once Zhilin went up the mountain to see how the old chief lived. As he went along a little path he

The Captive In the Caucasus

saw a little garden surrounded by a stone fence with wild cherry and peach trees looking over it, and inside a little hut with a flat roof. Zhilin approached nearer, and then he saw beehives made of plaited straw—*ului* they called them—and the bees flying about and humming. And the little old man was on his tiny knees doing something to the hives. Zhilin raised himself a little higher to have a better look, and his *kolodka* grated. The little old man looked round and whined aloud, then he drew a pistol out of his girdle and fired point-blank at Zhilin. After firing he hid behind a stone.

Next morning the old man came down to Zhilin's master to complain of him. Zhilin's master called him and said to him with a laugh :

"Why didst thou go to the old man?"

"I did him no harm," said Zhilin. "I only wanted to see how he lived."

Zhilin's master interpreted.

The old man was very angry however. He hissed and gabbled, and his two fangs protruded, and he shook his fist at Zhilin.

Zhilin did not understand it at all. All he understood was that the old man bade his master kill all the Russians and not keep any of them in the *aul*. Finally, the old man went away.

Zhilin now began to ask his master who the little old man was, and this is what his master told him.

"That is a great man. He was our foremost *zhigit*," and has killed many Russians ; he is also rich. Once he had eight sons, and they all dwelt together

More Tales from Tolstol

in one village. The Russians came, destroyed the village, and slew seven of his sons. One son only remained, and he surrendered to the Russians. Then the old man went away, and surrendered himself also to the Russians. He lived with them for three months, found out where his son was, slew^f him, and ran away. From thenceforth he renounced warfare and went to Mecca—to pray to God. Hence he has his turban. Whoever has been to Mecca is called Hadji, and may put on a turban. He does not love thy brother.* He bade me slay thee, but I will not slay thee, because I want to make money out of thee; and, besides, I have begun to love thee, Ivan, and so far from killing thee, I would not let thee go away at all if I hadn't given my word upon it." He laughed, and ~~then~~ he added in Russian: "The welfar^e of thee, Ivan, is the welfare of me, Abdul!"

IV.

So Zhilin lived like this for a month. In the day-time he went about the *aul*, or made all sorts of things with his hands, and when night came, and all was silent in the *aul*, he began digging inside his out-house. Digging was difficult because of the rock, but he fretted away the rock with a file, and dug a hole under the wall, through which, at the proper time, he meant to crawl.

"If only I knew the place fairly well," he said to himself, "if only I knew in which direction to go. But the Tatars never give themselves away."

* The speaker himself.

The Captive in the Caucasus

One day he chose a time when his master had gone away, and after dinner he went up the mountain behind the *aul*—he wanted to survey the whole place from thence. But when his master went away he had commanded a lad to follow Zhilin wherever he went and not lose sight of him. So the youngster ran after Zhilin, and cried: "Don't go! Father didn't tell you to. I'll call the people this instant."

Zhilin set about persuading him.

"I'm not going far," said he, "I only want to climb that mountain there. I want to find herbs to cure your people. Come with me! I can't run away with this *kolodka* on my leg. And to-morrow I'll make you a bow and arrows."

So he persuaded the lad and they went together. The mountain did not seem far, but it was difficult going with the *kolodka*; he went on and on and it taxed his utmost strength. When he got to the summit Zhilin sat down to take a good look at the place. To the south, behind the outhouse, was a gully, a *tabun** was roaming along there, and another *aul* was visible as a tiny point. Beyond this *aul* was another and still steeper mountain, and behind this mountain yet another. Between the mountains was the blue outline of a wood, and there could be seen other mountains, rising higher and higher. And higher than all, as white as sugar, stood yet other mountains covered with snow. And one snowy mountain with a cap on stood out higher than all the rest. On the east and on the west were similar mountains; here and there smoking *auls* could

* A herd of horses.

More Tales from Tolstol

be seen in the ravines. "Well," thought Zhilin, "all that is their part of the country." Then he began looking towards the Russian side—at his feet were the stream, his own *aul*, and little gardens all around. By the stream, like so many little puppets, the women were sitting and rinsing clothes.* Behind the *aul*, somewhat lower down, was a mountain with two other mountains in between, and after that came woods; and between the two mountains, looking blue in the distance, was a level space, and far, far away in this level space some smoke was rising. Zhilin tried to remember where the sun used to rise and where it used to set when he lived at home in the fortress. And then he saw that "our"* fortress must needs be on that very plain. Thither, then, between the two mountains, his flight must lie.

The sun was beginning to set. The snow-covered mountains turned from white to rosy red; the black mountains grew darker; the mist began to ascend from the gullies, and that very valley in which the Russian fortress needs must be glowed like a fire in the distant West. Zhilin looked steadily in that direction—something was dimly visible in the valley like smoke from a tube. And he thought to himself that must be the Russian fortress itself.

It was getting late. The cry of the mullah could be heard from where they were. The flocks were being driven homewards, the cows were lowing. The little lad kept on saying: "Let's be going!" but Zhilin did not want to go.

At last, however, they turned homewards. "Well,"

* *I.e.* —the Russian fortress.

The Captive in the Caucasus

thought Zhilin, "at any rate I know the place now, and must make a bolt for it." He would have liked to have escaped that very night. The nights just then were dark—the moon was on the wane. Unfortunately, the Tatars returned that very evening. They used to come in driving captured cattle before them in a merry mood; but on this occasion they drove in nothing at all, and brought along with them on his saddle a slain Tatar, the brother of the red-bearded Tatar. They arrived very wrathful, and gathered together to bury their comrade. Zhilin also came out to see what was going on. They wrapped the corpse in a piece of cloth without a coffin, then they placed it on the grass in the middle of the village under a plane-tree. The mullah arrived, and they all squatted down together on their heels in front of the corpse.

The mullah was in front, behind him sat the three village elders in their turbans, and in a row with and behind them some more Tatars. There they sat with dejected eyes and in silence. The silence lasted for a long time, and then the mullah raised his head and spoke:

"Allah!" he said. It was the only word he spoke—and once more they all cast down their eyes and were silent for a long time. They sat there without stirring. Again the mullah raised his voice:

"Allah!"

"Allah!" they all repeated, and were again silent. The dead man was lying on the grass, he moved not, and they all sat round him like dead men. Not one of them stirred. The only thing to be heard was

More Tales from Tolstoi

the quivering of the tiny leaves of the plane-tree in the light breeze. Then the mullah recited the prayer, and they all stood up, raised the dead man, and carried him away. They carried him to the grave. The grave was not simply dug out but burrowed underneath the ground like a cellar. They lifted the dead man beneath the shoulders and under the legs, bent him a little inwards, and slowly let him go, thrusting him in under the earth in a sitting position, and pulling his arms straight down close to his body.

The Nogaets then brought green rushes and filled up the hole therewith, strewed it with fresh earth, made it level, and placed at the head of the dead man an upright stone. Then they stamped down the earth, again sat them round about the grave, and were for a long time silent.

"Allah! Allah! Allah!" And they sighed deeply and stood up.

The red-bearded man distributed money among the elders, then he arose, took up his short whip, struck his forehead three times, and went home.

In the morning Zhilin saw them leading a fine mare out of the village with three Tatars following behind. When they got right out of the village, the red-bearded Tatar took off his *beshmet*, tucked up his sleeves—what big brawny arms he had!—drew forth his knife, and sharpened it on a *bruska*.* The Tatars then drew forward the mare's head, and the red-bearded man came forward and cut her throat, flung the mare to the ground, and began to flay her, separating

* A tetragonal piece of sandstone.

The Captive in the Caucasus

the hide from the flesh with his huge hands. Then the women and the girls came up and began to wash the entrails and the inside. After that they cut up the mare and dragged the meat into the hut. And the whole village came together at the house of the red-bearded man to commemorate the deceased.

Three days they ate of the mare, drank *busa*, and commemorated the deceased.

All the Tatars were at home now, but on the fourth day Zhilin, after dinner, beheld them assembling to go somewhither. They brought their horses, made ready, and went off, ten men in all, and the red-bearded man went too—only Abdul remained at home. There was a new moon just then, and the nights were still pretty dark.

"Now's the time," thought Zhilin; "now we must make a bolt for it." He spoke to Kostuilin about it, but Kostuilin was afraid.

"How can we run away?—we don't know the road!" said he.

"I know the road."

"But we shall never be able to get there in the night."

"Suppose we don't, surely we can pass the night in the forest? And look! I've collected some hearth-cakes. Why do you want to stick here? 'Tis easy enough to send for money, but you see they haven't collected it. And besides, the Tatars are angry now because the Russians have killed one of their people. They have been talking together about killing us likewise."

Kostuilin thought and thought for a long time.

"Very well, let us go!" said he at last.

More Tales from Tolstol

V.

Zhilin crept into his hole and dug still deeper in order that Kostuilin also might be able to creep through it, then they sat down and waited till all was quiet in the *aul*.

As soon as all the people in the *aul* were quiet, Zhilin crept under the wall and forced his way through. Then he whispered to Kostuilin:

"You creep through too!" and as he did so he loosed a stone, which made a great noise. Zhilin's master, however, had placed a guard at the door—a piebald dog, a vicious, a very vicious beast. His name was Ulyashin. But Zhilin had made it his business regularly to feed the animal for some time. As soon as Ulyashin heard them he began to bark and rushed up, and after him all the other dogs. But Zhilin just whistled to him, and threw him a bit of hearth-cake. Then Ulyashin recognised him, wagged his tail, and ceased to bark.

But Zhilin's master had heard, and he now began to shout from out of the *saklya*:

"Hold him! hold him, Ulyashin!"

Zhilin, however, was busy scratching Ulyashin behind the ears, and the dog was silent, rubbed himself against Zhilin's legs, and wagged his tail.

They sat down behind a corner. All grew quiet again. All that could be heard were the sheep shuffling in their fold, and the water below bubbling over the stones. It was dark. The stars stood high in the heavens, the young red moon stood over the

The Captive in the Caucasus

mountain with her horns pointed upwards. In the valley gleamed a milk-white mist.

Zhilin arose, and said to his comrade :

"Now, my brother, let's be off!"

Something stirred just as they were starting. They stopped, to listen. "The mullah was chanting on the roof :

"Allah! Bismillah! Il'rakhman!" which signifies :
"Come, people, to the Mosque!"

They sat down again, squeezing themselves against the wall. Long they sat there, waiting till the people should have gone by. Again all was silent.

"Now, then, in God's name!"

They crossed themselves and set out. They went through the courtyard, down the steep slope to the stream, crossed the stream, and went along the gully. The mist was thick and stood low, and over their heads the stars were dimly, tinily visible. Zhilin calculated by the stars which way he ought to take. It was fresh in the mist and easy going, but their boots were in their way and made them stumble. Zhilin took his off, threw them away, and went along barefooted. He kept leaping from rock to rock and looking at the stars. Kostuilin began to lag behind.

"Go more quietly!" said he ; "these cursed boots of mine,—but all boots fetter one so!"

"Take them off, then! You'll find it easier going."

Kostuilin also then went barefooted—and found it still worse. He was bruising his feet continually on the stones, and kept lagging behind more than ever.

"Lift up your feet more, look alive!" said Zhilin,

More Tales from Tolstol

"if they overtake us they'll kill us, and that will be worst of all."

Kostuilin said nothing. He came on puffing and blowing. For a long time they went down hill. They listened—the dogs were barking on their right. Zhilin stopped and looked about him. He went to the mountain-side and felt it with his hands.

"Oh!" said he, "we have made a mistake; we turned to the right. Here is another *aui*, I could see it from the mountain-top, we must go back—to the left—up the mountain. There is sure to be a road there."

"Just wait a little," said Kostuilin; "do give me time to breathe a bit—my feet are all bloody."

"Look alive, my brother! Spring a little more lightly—that's the whole trick!"

And Zhilin ran back to the left towards the mountain and into the wood. Kostuilin remained all behind, groaning and gasping.

Zhilin kept urging him to be quicker, but went on himself without stopping.

They ascended the mountain. Yes—there, right enough, was the wood. They entered the wood—and all that was left of their clothing was quickly torn to bits. Then they hit upon a path in the wood, and went steadily on.

Stop! The sound of hoofs resounded on the road. They stopped and listened. There was a stamping as of a horse, and then it stopped. They moved on again—the stamping recommenced. They stopped—and the stamping stopped. Zhilin crept forward and looked along the road in the light—

The Captive in the Caucasus

something was standing there. It was a horse, and yet not a horse, and on the horse was something odd, not resembling a man. It snorted—they listened. "What monster could it be?" Zhilin whistled very softly—it scurried off the path into the forest, and in the forest there was a crashing sound—it flew like a tempest, breaking down the branches in its path.

Kostuilin almost fell to the ground in his terror. But Zhilin laughed and said :

"That was a stag. Hark how he smashes the wood with his horns. We fear him and he fears us."

They went along further. Morning was now close at hand. Where they were going, however, they knew not. It seemed to Zhilin as if the Tatars had brought him along by ~~that~~ selfsame path, and as far as he could make it but they had still some ten versts to traverse ; but there were no certain landmarks, and it was night, so that there was no distinguishing anything. Presently they came out upon a little plain, and Kostuilin sat down and said :

"You may do as you like, but I shall never get there. My legs won't do it."

Zhilin tried to persuade him.

"No," said he, "I shan't go any further—I can't, I tell you."

Zhilin then grew angry. He spat on one side and bullied his comrade.

"Then I'll go on alone," said he—"good-bye!"

Then Kostuilin leaped to his feet and went on. They now went on for four miles. The mist in the forest grew still thicker ; they could see nothing in front of them, and the stars were barely visible.

More Tales from Tolstoi

At last they heard something like the trampling of a horse in front of them. They could hear the hoofs clattering against the stones. Zhilin lay down on his stomach and began to listen with his ear to the ground.

"Yes," said he, "it is as I thought. A horseman is coming towards us."

They quitted the road in haste, sat among the bushes, and waited. Zhilin presently crept forward towards the road and saw a mounted Tatar coming along, driving a cow before him, and muttering to himself. After he had gone Zhilin turned to Kostuilin and said:

"He's gone by, thank God! Get up, and we'll go on!"

Kostuilin tried to get up and fell down again. He was a heavy, puffy fellow, and began to sweat profusely. The cold mist of the forest, too, had given him a chill, his feet were lacerated, and he went all to pieces. When Zhilin raised him to his feet with an effort he cried out:

"Oh! it hurts!"

Zhilin almost had a fit.

"What are you screeching for! The Tatars are quite close to us—don't you hear?" But he thought to himself: "He really is almost done for; what am I to do with him? One can't chuck a comrade, it wouldn't be right."

"Well," said he, "get up on my back. I'll carry you if you really can't walk yourself."

So he put Kostuilin on his shoulders, gripped him under the knees, took the road again, and staggered along.

The Captive in the Caucasus

"Only, my good fellow," said he, "don't grip me round the throat, but lay hold of my shoulders."

It was a heavy load for Zhilin. His feet also were all bloody, and he was tired to death. He felt crushed, tried to get into an easier position, hitched his shoulder so as to get Kostuilin to sit higher—and flung him into the road.

It was quite plain that the Tatar had heard Kostuilin yell, for as Zhilin listened he could hear someone coming back and making a peculiar cry. Zhilin flung himself into the bushes. The Tatar seized his musket, fired it, hit nothing, whined in Tatar fashion, and galloped down the road again.

"Well, my brother, he has gone anyway," said Zhilin; "but the dog will at once collect all the Tatars he can find and pursue us. If we don't do our three miles, we're done for." But he thought to himself: "What devil put it into my head to take this block-head with me! Had I been alone I should have got off long ago."

"You go on alone," said Kostuilin, "why should you come to grief all through me?"

"Nay, I will not go alone, it is wrong to desert a comrade."

So he took him on his shoulders again and went on. And in this way he covered a mile. The forest stretched right on, and there was no sign of an exit. The mist was beginning to disperse, and little clouds—or so they seemed—fared along, the stars were no longer visible. Zhilin was puzzled.

A spring, set among rocks, crossed the road, and here Zhilin stopped and set down Kostuilin.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Let's have a rest," said he, "and give me breathing-time. I want a drink, too, and we'll have some hearth-cakes. It can't be much further now."

No sooner had he drunk his fill, however, than he heard the trampling of hoofs behind. Once more they crept among the bushes on the right, beneath the steep cliff, and lay at full length.

Soon they heard the voices of the Tatars, and the Tatars stopped at the very spot whence they had turned off from the road. They talked a good deal amongst themselves, and then they began to put upon the scent the dogs they had brought with them. Zhilin and his comrade listened. There was a crashing of branches in the thicket, and straight towards them came a strange dog. When he saw them he stood still and began barking.

Then the Tatars also crept through the bushes—they were strange Tatars whom they hadn't seen before—and the Tatars seized them, bound them, put them on horseback, and led them off.

They went along for about three miles, and then they met Zhilin's master, Abdul, and two other Tatars. These said something to the strange Tatars, transferred the captives to their own horses, and brought them back to the *aul*.

Abdul laughed no longer, and said not a single word to them.

They brought them into the *aul* at break of day, and set them down in the public street. The children came running up and beat them with stones and whips and jeered at them.

The Tatars gathered together in a circle, and the

The Captive in the Caucasus

elder from the mountain-side joined them. They began talking, and Zhilin understood that they were trying them and debating what was to be done with them. Some said they should be sent further away into the mountains, but the elder said that they ought to be killed. Abdul, however, objected to this. "I have paid money for them," said he, "and I am going to get a ransom for them."

"They'll never pay anything at all," replied the old man, "but will only do harm. It's a sin to feed Russians. Kill them and have done with it!"

Then they separated, and Zhilin's master came to him and began to talk to him.

"If they don't send me your ransom in a fortnight," said he, "I'll whip you to death, and if you try to run away a second time I'll kill you like dogs. Write a letter, and mind you write a good one!"

Paper was brought and they wrote the letter. Then the *kolodki* were fastened to them again, and they were taken to the mosque. Here there was a hole in the earth five *arshins* long, and into this hole they were cast.

VI.

Their life was now hard indeed. Their *kolodki* were never taken off, and they were never allowed a breath of fresh air. The Tatars flung them bits of uncooked dough as if they were dogs, and filled for them a pitcher of water from time to time.

The heat of the hole was stifling, and it was damp and stinking. Kostuilin became downright ill. His

More Tales from Tolstol

limbs swelled and twitched all over, and he groaned continually except when he was asleep. Zhilin also was dejected ; he saw they were in evil case, and how to get out of it he had no idea.

He would have begun undermining again, but there was nowhere to hide the earth, and then, too, his master had threatened to kill him.

One day he was squatting in the hole thinking of life and liberty, and he felt very miserable. Suddenly right upon his knees fell a hearth-cake, and then another, followed by quite a shower of wild cherries. He looked up and there was Dina. She gazed at him, laughed a little, and ran away. "Now I wonder if *Dina* would help us," thought Zhilin.

He cleaned a little corner of the hole, dug out a bit of clay, and made out of it a lot of puppets. He made men and women, horses and dogs, and thought to himself, "When Dina comes I'll fling them out to her."

But on the next day there was no Dina, and Zhilin heard the trampling of horses and the noise of people passing to and fro, and he could hear that the Tatars had assembled at the mosque and were disputing and screeching and consulting about the Russians. And he also heard the voice of the old man of the mountain. He could not make out very well what was going on, but he guessed that the Russians were drawing near, and the Tatars were afraid they might come to the *aui* and find out what was being done with the captives.

The Tatars debated together and then departed. Suddenly Zhilin heard a slight noise above his head.

The Captive in the Caucasus

He looked up, and there was Dina squatting on her haunches with her knees hunched up higher than her head; she was leaning forward, her necklaces were visible, and were swinging to and fro right over the hole. Her little eyes gleamed like tiny stars, and she drew out of her sleeve two cheese-cakes and threw them to him.

Zhilin took them and said: "Why have you been so long gone? I have been making playthings for you. Look!" And he began to fling them to her one by one.

But she shook her head and would not look at them. "I don't want 'em," she said. She sat silent for a while, and then she said, "Ivan, they want to kill thee," and she drew her hand across her throat.

"Who wants to kill me?"

"Father, the elders have bidden him do it. But I'm sorry for thee."

"If you are sorry for me," said Zhilin, "bring me a long pole."

She shook her head to signify that it was impossible. He put together his hands and besought her.

"Dina, I pray thee do it! Dear little Dina, bring it to me!"

"Impossible," said she, "they are all at home, you see!" and off she ran.

So Zhilin sat there all the evening and thought: "What will come of it, I wonder?" He kept looking up all the time. The stars were visible, but the moon had not yet risen. The mullah's shrill cry was heard—and then all was silent. Zhilin began to

More Tales from Tolstol

grow drowsy. "Plainly, the girl is afraid," he thought.

Suddenly a piece of clay plumped down on his head. He looked up—a long pole was thrust into a corner of the hole. It waggled about, descended gradually, and began to work its way into the hole. Zhilin was delighted. He caught hold of it and drew it in—it was a good strong pole. He had noticed this pole some time before on the roof of his master's home.

He looked up again. The stars were shining high in the heavens, and right above the hole the eyes of Dina shone as brightly as the eyes of a cat in the darkness. She leaned forward over the mouth of the hole and whispered:

"Ivan! Ivan!" and she kept on making signs and drawing her hands repeatedly over her face by way of saying: "Hush! be quiet!"

"What is it?" asked Zhilin.

"They have all gone, there are only two at home."

"Well, Kostuulin, let us go," said Zhilin, "we will try for the last time. I'll help you to get out of it."

But Kostuulin wouldn't even hear of it.

"No," said he, "it's quite plain that I can't manage it. I have not the strength to go quickly, whichever way we go."

"Farewell then! and think no ill of me for leaving you!" And he embraced Kostuulin.

Then he seized the pole, bade Dina hold it firm, and began to creep up it. Once or twice he fell down—the *kolodka* hampered him. Kostuulin then supported him, and he worked his way some distance

The Captive in the Caucasus

up. Dina dragged away at his shirt with her little hands with all her might, laughing all the time, but it was no good.

Then Zhilin laid hold of the pole with both hands.

"Pull it, Dina!" he cried, "seize hold of it well, and you'll see it will almost come to you of its own accord."

She pulled away at the pole accordingly, and presently Zhilin found himself up at the mountain's-side. He crept down the steep declivity, seized a sharp stone, and tried hard to force the lock of the *kolodka*. But the lock was a strong one, by no means could he break it, and yet he was not unskilful. Then he heard someone running down the mountain-side and leaping lightly along. "That must be Dina again," thought Zhilin. And Dina it was. Up she came running, took up a large stone, and said:

"Give it me!"

She squatted down on her little knees, and began to try her hand at it. But her little arms, as thin as twigs, had no strength in them, and she threw away the stone and burst into tears. Then Zhilin himself had another try at the lock while Dina sat down beside him, leaning against his shoulder. Zhilin glanced round and saw on the left side of the mountain a burning red reflection—the moon was rising. "Well," thought he, "before the moon rises I must make my way through the gully and get to the wood." He rose and threw away the stone. *Kolodka* or no—go he must.

"Good-bye, little Dina," said he; "I shall always remember thee."

More Tales from Tolstoi

Dina seized him, and began to fumble about his sleeves to see if she could find a place wherein to stuff some pancakes. He took the pancakes.

"Thanks, my wise little woman," said he; "who will make dolls for thee when I am gone, I wonder?" And he stroked her head.

How bitterly Dina wept! Finally she covered her face with her hands and ran away up the mountain like a wild kid. The clattering of the coins in the long tresses of hair hanging down her back was audible in the darkness.

Zhilin crossed himself, seized the lock of the *kclodka* so as not to stumble as he went, and hobbled along the road, gazing constantly at the reflection of light where the moon was rising. He knew the road. He had to go straight on for about eight miles. If only he could get to the forest before the moon had quite risen! He crossed the stream—the light behind the mountain was growing brighter. He passed through the gully. On he went, glancing upwards from time to time—still the moon was not visible. The burning reflection was increasing, and everything on one side of the gully was growing brighter and brighter. A shadow was creeping along the mountain and coming nearer and nearer to him.

Zhilin went on and on, and the shadows still continued to advance. He hastened on, and the moon was working her way out even more quickly than he had anticipated, to the right the tops of the trees were already lit up. He was now close to the forest when the moon burst forth from behind the mountain—everything was as light and bright as if it were

The Captive In the Caucasus

day. Every little leaf on every little tree was visible. It was quite quiet on the lit-up mountain-sides as if everything had died out of existence. The only thing to be heard was the gurgling of the stream below.

He reached the forest without anything happening. Zhilin chose the darkest spot he could find in the forest, and there he sat down to rest.

After recovering his breath, he ate a hearth-cake. Then he took a stone, and again set about battering the *kolodka*. He battered it with all the strength of his arm, and he could not break it. He arose and went along the road. He went for a mile, got thoroughly exhausted—his legs tottered beneath him. Ten steps more he took, and then he stopped short.

"It's no use," said he; "all I can do is to drag myself on as long as I have the strength to do so. If once I sit down I shall not get up again. I can never get to the fortress to-day, but as soon as it is dawn I will lie up in the forest and at night I'll go on again."

All night he went along. The only people he encountered were two mounted Tatars, and as he saw them at a distance, he was able to hide away from them behind a tree.

The moon had already begun to wane, the dew was falling, it was close upon dawn, and still Zhilin had not got to the end of the forest. "Well," thought he, "just thirty steps more, and then I'll turn into the forest and sit down." He took the thirty steps, and saw that the forest was coming to an end. He went out to the very end of it. There, quite bright

More Tales from Tolstol

before him, as if on the palm of his hands, lay the steppe and the fortress, and to the left, quite close under the mountain-side, camp-fires were burning and smoking, and people were standing round the smouldering logs.

He gazed fixedly, and saw cossacks—soldiers—and glistening arms.

Zhilin, full of joy, rallied his last remaining strength, and prepared to descend the mountain-side.

"God grant," thought he, "that a mounted Tatar may not see me in the open plain, although I'm pretty near now, I'm not there yet."

And the thought was no sooner in his head, when behold! on a little mound stood three Tatars, about two furlongs off. They saw him—and dashed after him. His heart absolutely died away within him. Then he waved his arms and shouted with all the breath he had in his body:

"My brothers! my brothers! save me!"

Our fellows heard him, and some mounted Cossacks galloped forward. They made for him in an oblique direction to cut off the Tatars.

The Cossacks were far off, the Tatars were near, but now Zhilin rallied all his strength, seized his *kolodka*, and ran towards the Cossacks, no longer remembering who he was, but crossing himself and crying continually:

"Brothers! brothers! brothers!"

The Cossacks were about fifteen in number.

The Tatars grew frightened—instead of drawing nearer they reined in their horses. And Zhilin ran right into the Cossacks.

The Captive in the Caucasus

The Cossacks surrounded him, and asked him who he was and whence he came. But Zhilin no longer recollected who he was, and burst out crying, babbling all the time:

“Brothers! brothers!”

The regular soldiers next came running out, and crowded round Zhilin. One of them offered him bread, another broth, a third covered him with a mantle, a fourth broke up the *kolodka*.

The officers presently recognised him, and conducted him to the fortress. The soldiers were delighted, and his comrades gathered round Zhilin.

Zhilin told them all that had happened to him, and said:

“You see, I was going home to be married. But no!—that is not to be my fate evidently!”

And so he continued to serve in the Caucasus.

As for Kostuilin, they only ransomed him three months later for five thousand roubles. They brought him in barely alive.

III.—HATRED IS SWEET, BUT GOD IS STRONG

IN the olden time there lived a good master. He had much of everything, and many slaves served him. And the slaves praised their master. They said: "There is no master better than our master under heaven. He clothes and feeds us well, and gives us work to do according to our strength; he offends none by word of mouth, and bears no grudge for anything. He is not like other masters who torment their slaves and treat them worse than cattle, and punish them whether they commit faults or not, and have not a good word to say to them. Our master has our welfare at heart, and does good to us, and speaks well to us. We want no better life than the life we lead."

Thus did the slaves praise their master. And the Devil was wroth because the slaves lived so well, and in all loving-kindness with their master. And the Devil took possession of one of the slaves of this master, whose name was Aleb. He took possession of him, and bade him offend the other slaves. And when the other slaves were resting from their labours and praising their master, Aleb also lifted up his voice and said:

"Vainly do ye praise the goodness of our master, my brethren. Try and please the Devil, and the

Hatred is Sweet, but God is Strong

Devil will do you good. We serve our master well, we please him in everything. Whatever he fancies that we do for him, we anticipate his thoughts. How can he help being good to us? But just cease to please, and do him evil, then you'll find he'll be like all the rest of them, and will render evil for evil even worse than the bad masters do."

And the other slaves began to dispute with Aleb. And they disputed and laid a wager together. And Aleb undertook to provoke the good master to anger. He undertook to do so on this condition: that if he did not provoke him to anger he should lose his festival garment, but if he did provoke him to anger they promised that each one of them should give him his festival garment; and besides that they promised to defend him against his master, and if he put him in irons or thrust him into a dungeon they said they would loose him. So they laid their wager, and the next morning Aleb promised to provoke his master to anger.

Aleb served his master in the sheep-folds and took charge of the costly breeding rams. And behold! in the morning, when the good master came to the sheep-folds with his guests and began to show them his dear and precious rams, the Devil's labourer signified to his comrades: "Look now, I'll provoke my master to anger instantly." All the slaves assembled. They looked through doors and over fences, and the Devil ran up a tree, and looked down from thence into the yard to see how his servant would serve him. The master entered the yard and showed his guests his sheep and his lambs, and wanted to show

More Tales from Tolstol

them his best ram. "The other rams are good," said he, "but this is one with strong horns; he is priceless, and more precious to me than my own eyes." The sheep and rams rushed about the yard because of the people, and the guests could not distinguish the precious ram amongst them. No sooner did this ram stand still than the Devil's labourer, as if by accident, scared the sheep, and again they were all intermingled. The guests could not distinguish the ram that was priceless. And the master began to be wearied. "Aleb, my dear friend," said he, "see thou to this! Catch the best ram with the strong horns very warily and hold him fast." And no sooner had the master said this than Aleb flung himself like a lion in the middle of the lambs and sheep, and seized the priceless ram by his shorn fleece. He seized it by the shorn fleece, and immediately clasped it round its left hind leg with one of his hands, lifted it up, and right before the very eyes of his master, tugged the leg violently upwards, and it snapped like the peeled branch of a young linden-tree. Aleb had broken the leg of the good ram below the knee. The ram began to bleat, and fell down on its front knees. Aleb seized it by the right leg, and the left leg turned inwards and hung down like a short whip. The guests and all the slaves groaned, and the Devil rejoiced when he saw how cleverly Aleb had done his deed. The master turned as black as night, he frowned, cast down his head, and said not a word. The guests and the slaves were silent. They wanted to see what would happen. The master was silent

Hatred is Sweet, but God is Strong

for a time, then he shook himself as if he wanted to shake off something, raised his head, and fixed his eyes on heaven. Not long did he look, his wrinkles disappeared from his face, and he smiled and cast his eyes upon Aleb. He looked at Aleb, smiled, and said :

“Oh, Aleb, Aleb! thy master bade thee anger me. But my master is stronger than thine, and thou hast not angered me, but I have angered thy master. Thou didst fear that I would punish thee, and thou didst wish to be free, Aleb; know, therefore, that I will not punish thee, but as thou didst desire thy freedom, look now! in the presence of my guests I release thee, thou art free to follow thine own will. Depart whithersoever thou wilt, to the four corners of the earth, and take thy festival garment with thee!”

And the good master went home with his guests. But the Devil gnashed his teeth, glided down the tree, and vanished through the earth.

IV. ELIAS

THERE dwelt once upon a time in the Uîmsk government a Bashkir named Elias. The father of Elias had left him a poor man. His father had only gotten him a wife a year before, and then died. In those days Elias owned seven mares, two cows, and twice ten sheep. But Elias was now the master, and began to spread himself out; from morn to eve he laboured with his wife, rose up earlier and lay down later than all other men, and grew richer every year. Five-and-thirty years did Elias continue to labour, and won for himself great possessions.

Elias now had two hundred head of horses, a hundred and fifty head of horned cattle, and one thousand two hundred sheep. Many men-servants pastured the *tabuns** and the herds of Elias, and many maid-servants milked the mares and the cows and made kumis, butter and cheese. Elias had much of everything, and everybody round about envied the life of Elias. People said: "Ah, what a lucky fellow that Elias is! He has everything in abundance, he has no need to die." And good people began to know Elias and make his acquaintance. And guests came to him from afar. And Elias welcomed them

* Studs of horses.

all, and gave them to eat and to drink. Whosoever came to him found abundance of kumis, and tea, and sherbet, and the flesh of rams. Whenever guests came a ram or two was immediately killed, and if there were many guests they killed a mare.

Elias had three children—two sons and a daughter. Elias had provided his sons with wives, and had given his daughter in marriage. While Elias was poor his sons had worked with him and guarded the herds and the *tabuns* themselves, but when the sons became rich they began to amuse themselves, and one of them took to drink. One of them—the eldest—was presently killed in a brawl, and the younger son fell into the power of a stuck-up wife, and this son no longer listened to his father, and ~~Elias had to~~ give him his portion and get rid of him.

So Elias paid him out and gave him a house and cattle, and the riches of Elias were diminished. And shortly after this a disease fell upon the sheep of Elias, and many of them perished. And then came a year of scarceness—no hay would grow—and many cattle starved in the winter. Then the Kirghiz came and stole the best part of the horses, and the estate of Elias diminished still further. Elias began to fall lower and lower, and his natural forces were less. And when he had reached his seventieth year things came to such a pass that he began to sell his furs, his carpets, his *kibitki*,* and then he began to sell his cattle, down to the very last one; and so Elias came to nought. And he himself perceived that he had nothing left, and he was obliged in his old age

* A covered wagon.

More Tales from Tolstoi

to go with his wife to live among the common people. And the only things which Elias could now call his own were the clothes he had on his body, his fur cloak, his hat, and his shoes; and his wife, Shem Shemagi, was also an old woman. The son whom he had bought off departed into a distant land, and his daughter died. And there was none to help the old folks.

Their neighbour, Muhamedshah, pitied the old folks. He himself was neither rich nor poor, but lived at his ease, and he was a good man. He remembered that he had eaten bread and salt with Elias, and he was filled with compassion and said to Elias:

.. "Come to me, Elias, and live with me along with thine old woman. In the summer thou shalt work for me according to thy strength in the melon fields, and in the winter thou shalt feed my cattle, and let Shem Shemagi milk the cows and make kumis. I will feed and clothe you both, and whatever ye may want tell it me and I will give it you."

Elias thanked his neighbour and dwelt with his wife in the house of Muhamedshah as one of his servants. At first it seemed grievous to them, but soon they grew accustomed to it, and the old people continued to live there and work according to their strength.

It was profitable to the master to have such people, for the old folks had themselves been masters and knew how things should be rightly ordered, and were not idle but worked according to their ability;

the only thing which grieved Muhamedshah was to see people who had been so high fall to such a low estate.

And it chanced one day that distant relations came as guests to Muhamedshah, and a Mullah came also. And Muhamedshah bade Elias take a ram and slay it. Elias skinned the ram and cooked it, and set it before the guests. The guests ate the ram's flesh, drank as much tea as they wanted, and then fell a-drinking kumis. The guests sat with their host on down cushions on the floor and drank their kumis out of little cups, and conversed together, and Elias went about his work and passed by the door where they were sitting.

Muhamedshah saw him and said to ~~one~~ of his guests: "Didst thou see that old man who passed by my door?"

"I saw him," said the guest; "is there anything extraordinary about him?"

"There is this much extraordinary about him—that he was once upon a time our richest man—Elias they called him; perchance thou hast heard concerning him?"

"How could I help hearing of him?" replied the guest; "seen it all I have not, but the fame of him was spread far and wide."

"Well, now he hath nought, and he lives with me as a servant, and his old woman lives with him and milks my cows."

The guest was astonished. He clicked with his tongue, shook his head, and said: "Ah! 'tis plain how fortune goes flying round like a wheel. One she

More Tales from Tolstol

raises on high, another she thrusts down below. Tell me," said the guest, "is the heart of the old man sore within him, perchance?"

"Who can tell? He lives peaceably and quietly, and looks well.

May one converse with him?" said the guest; "I should like to question him concerning his life."

"Certainly, it is possible," replied the host, and he shouted from behind the *kibitka*, "Babad," which signifies grandfather in the Bashkir language, "go and drink kumis and call hither the old man!"

And Elias came to them with his wife. Elias greeted the guests and the host, recited a prayer, and squatted down on his knees at the door, and his wife went behind the curtain and sat down with her mistress.

They gave Elias a cup full of kumis. Elias drank the healths of the guests and the host, did obeisance, drank a little more, and then placed the cup aside.

"Now, tell me, grandfather," said one of the guests, "I suppose it grieves thee looking at us, to call to mind thy former life, and to recollect how fortunate thou wert, and how now thou dwellest in misery?"

And Elias smiled and said: "If I were to speak to thee of good fortune and ill fortune thou wouldst not believe me—far better it would be if thou didst ask my old wife concerning this thing. She is a woman, and therefore what her heart feeleth that her tongue speaketh; she will tell thee the whole truth about this matter."

And the guest spake, turning towards the curtain:

"Speak now, old woman! tell me, how judgest thou concerning thy former good fortune and thy present ill fortune?"

And Shem Shemagi answered from behind the curtain: "This is how I judge: I and my old man lived together for fifty years; we sought after happiness and we could not find it, and only now this is the second year in which we have wanted for nothing, and we live as working folks and have found real happiness, and we want nothing else."

The guests were astonished and the host was astonished; he even rose up and threw aside the curtain to behold the old woman. And there the old woman stood with folded arms, and she was smiling, and she looked at her old man, and he smiled also.

And the old woman also said: "I speak the truth, I jest not: we sought happiness for half a hundred years, and while we were rich we did not find it at all; now that we have nothing left and live among working people we have found such happiness that we need nothing better."

"And in what, then, does your present happiness consist?"

"It consists in this: while we were rich I and my old man had not a single quiet hour together, we had no time to talk, no time to think of our souls, no time to pray to God. So many cares were we saddled with. At one time guests came to see us, and it was a worry what to set before each and with what presents to gratify them lest they should speak scornfully concerning us. Then there was the

More Tales from Tolstol

trouble of seeing to it that the wolves did not rend the lambs or kids or that thieves did not chase away the horses. Even when we lay down it was not to sleep, for we feared that the sheep might overlay the lambs in the night. You might get up and go about at night, and no sooner would your mind be at ease than a fresh worry would arise: how to find hay or pasturage in the winter time—and so it would go on. And all this was nothing to the disagreements between my old man and me. He would say: 'We ought to do this,' and then I would say: 'No! we ought to do that!' and so we began to curse each other, and that was sinful. Thus we lived, and went on from care to care, from sin to sin, and we found no happiness in life."

"Well, But now?"

"Now I and my old man rise up together, we converse lovingly and agree in all things, we have nought to quarrel about and nought to trouble us—our sole care is to serve our master. We labour according as we are able, we labour gladly, so that our master may have no loss and may prosper. We come to the house—there is dinner, there is supper, there is kumis. If it be cold there is the *kizyak** wherewith to warm ourselves, and there are furs. And there is time, when we wish it, to talk together, to think of our souls, and to pray to God. For fifty years we sought happiness, and only now have we found it."

The guests began to laugh.

But Elias said: "Laugh not, brethren! this is no

* Dried cow-dung used as fuel by the Bashkirs.

jest, but human life. And at first my old woman and I were fools and wept because we had lost our wealth, but now God hath revealed the truth to us, and now we also reveal it to you, not for our amusement but for your good."

And the Mullah said: "These be wise sayings, and Elias hath spoken the real truth, and all this is written down in the Scriptures."

And the guests ceased to laugh, and they pondered these things in their hearts.

V.—THE TWO BROTHERS AND THE GOLD

ONCE upon a time, in the days long since gone by, there dwelt at Jerusalem two brothers; the name of the elder was Athanasius, the name of the younger John. They dwelt on a hill not far from the town, and lived upon what people gave to them. Every day the brothers went out to work. They worked not for themselves, but for the poor. Wherever the overworked, the sick were to be found—wherever there were widows and orphans, thither went the brothers, and there they worked and spent their time, taking no payment. Thus the brothers went about separately the whole week, and only met together in the evening of the Sabbath at their own dwelling. Only on Sunday did they remain at home, praying and conversing together. And the Angel of the Lord came down to them and blessed them. On the Monday they separated again, each going his own way. Thus did the brothers live for many years, and every week the Angel of the Lord came down to them and blessed them.

One Monday, when the brothers had gone forth to work, and had parted their several ways, the elder brother, Athanasius, felt sorry at having had to part from his beloved brother, and he stood still and

The Two Brothers and the Gold

glanced after him. John was walking with bent head, and he did not look back. But suddenly John also stopped as if he perceived something and continued to gaze fixedly at it. Presently he drew near to that which he had been looking upon, and then suddenly leaped aside, and, not stopping for another instant, ran towards the mountain and up the mountain, right away from the place, just as if some savage beast were pursuing him. Athanasius was astonished, and turned back to the place to find out what his brother had been so afraid of. At last he approached the spot, and then he saw something glistening in the sun. He drew nearer—on the grass, as if poured out from a measure, lay a heap of gold. And Athanasius was still more astonished, both at the sight of the gold and at the leaping aside of his brother.

"What was he afraid of, and what did he run away from?" thought Athanasius. "There is no sin in gold, sin is in man. You may do ill with gold, but you may also do good. How many widows and orphans might not be fed therewith, how many naked ones might not be clothed, how many poor and sick might not be cared for and cured by means of this gold? Now, indeed, we minister to people, but our ministration is but little, because our power is small, and with this gold we might minister to people much more than we do now." Thus thought Athanasius, and would have said so to his brother, but John was by this time out of hearing, and looked no bigger than a cockchafer on the further mountain.

And Athanasius took off his garment, shovelled as much gold into it as he was able to carry, threw it

More Tales from Tolstoi

over his shoulder, and went into the town. He went to an inn, gave the gold to the innkeeper, and then went off to fetch the rest of it. And when he had brought in all the gold he went to the merchants, bought land in that town, bought stones, wood, hired labourers, and set about building three houses. And Athanasius abode in the town three months, and built the three houses in that town; one of the houses was an asylum for widows and orphans, the second house was a hospital for the sick, the third house was a hospice for the poor and for pilgrims. And Athanasius sought him out three God-fearing elders, and the first elder he placed over the refuge, the second over the hospital, and the third over the ~~hospice~~ for pilgrims. And Athanasius had three thousand gold pieces still left. And he gave a thousand to each of the elders that they might have wherewith to distribute among the poor. And all three houses began to be filled with people, and the people began to praise Athanasius for all that he had done. And Athanasius rejoiced thereat, so that he had no desire to depart from the town. But Athanasius loved his brother, and, taking leave of the people, and not keeping for himself a single coin of all this money, he went back to his dwelling in the selfsame old garment in which he had come to town.

Athanasius was drawing near to his mountain, and he thought to himself: "My brother judged wrongly when he leaped aside from the gold and ran away from it. Haven't I done much better?"

And Athanasius had no sooner thought this than suddenly he beheld standing in his path the Angel

The Two Brothers and the Gold

who had been sent to bless them, but now looked threateningly upon him. And Athanasius was aghast and could only say :

"Wherefore, my Lord?"

And the Angel opened his mouth and said :

"Depart from hence! Thou art not worthy to dwell with thy brother. That one leap aside of thy brother's was worth more than all that thou hast done with thy gold."

Athanasius began to talk of how many poor and how many pilgrims he had fed, and of how many orphans he had cared for.

And the Angel said to him :

"That same Devil who placed the gold there in order to corrupt thee, hath also put these big words into thy mouth."

And then the conscience of Athanasius upbraided him, and he understood that what he had done was not done for God, and he wept and began to repent.

Then the Angel stepped aside from the road, and left free for him the path in which John was already standing awaiting his brother. And from thenceforth Athanasius yielded no more to the wiles of the Devil who had strewn the gold in his path, and he understood that not by gold, but by good works only, could he render service to God and his fellow-man.

And the brethren dwelt together as before.

VI.—THE CHILDREN WISER THAN THE ELDERS

THE Holy-Tide fell early. Only in sledges could one fare quickly along. The snow lay upon the houses, and in the country the little streams were trickling. A large puddle was oozing from a manure heap between two houses into an alley. And two little children from different houses, one very small and the other somewhat older, had been drawn towards this puddle. The mothers of both children had dressed them in new *sarajans*.* The tinier child wore a blue one, the bigger child a yellow one with a nice pattern. Both had pretty kerchiefs tied round their heads. The children had gone out after dinner to the puddle, showed each other their pretty things, and begun to play. And then the desire seized them to go splashing about in the water. The little girl crept down in her slippers to the puddle, but the elder one said:

"Don't go, Malashka, mother will scold us. But if you like I'll take off my shoes and you take off your shoes too."

The children took off their shoes, tucked up their clothes, and went down to the puddle from different

* A long buttoned frock, without sleeves.

The Children Wiser than the Elders

sides. Malashka went in over her ankles and cried :

"It is so deep, Akulyushka, I'm afraid."

"Oh, it's nothing. It won't get any deeper, come straight towards me!"

They drew nearer. Presently Akul'ka said :

"Look out, Malashka! don't splash so much! Go more quietly!"

No sooner were the words out of her mouth than Malashka went plump! with her foot in the water, and splashed Akul'ka's sarafan all over. The sarafan was splashed all over, and the water went into the eyes and nose of Akul'ka also. On seeing the great stains on her sarafan Akul'ka began to be very angry with Malashka, scolded her, ran after her, and would have beaten her. Malashka grew frightened, saw that she had done mischief, leaped out of the puddle, and ran off home. Akul'ka's mother passed by, saw her daughter's sarafan all splashed, and her bodice all dirty.

"Where have you been, you dirty little wretch?" cried she.

"Malashka splashed me on purpose," said she.

Akul'ka's mother seized Malashka and boxed her ears. Malashka howled, so that the whole street could hear it. Malashka's mother came rushing out.

"Why do you beat my little one?" cried she, and she began to abuse her neighbour.

One word led to another, and the women reviled one another to their hearts' content. Then the *mushiks** themselves came out and formed quite a

* Peasants.

More Tales from Tolstol

large group in the street. All of them jabbered together, not one of them would listen to the others. They cursed and swore, then one of them hit his neighbour, and there was a general scrummage till an old woman, Akul'ka's grandmother, intervened. She went into the midst of the muzhiks and began to speak soothingly to them:

"What is this, my kinsmen? Is this the way to spend your days? We ought to rejoice, and you sin like this?"

But they did not listen to the old woman, and all but knocked her off her legs. Nor would the old woman have pacified them but for Akul'ka and Malashka. While the women were squabbling, Akul'ka had dried her little sarafan and came out again to the puddle in the lane. She picked up a little stone and began to fill up the puddle with earth in order to make the water flow over into the street. Whilst she was digging Malashka also came out and began to help her to dig a channel with a little chip of wood. The muzhiks still kept on wrangling, and all the time the water was running into the street through the channel made by the little girls, running right to the very place where the old woman was trying to bring the muzhiks to reason. The little girls began running one on one side and the other on the other side of the little rivulet they had made.

"Stop it, Malashka! stop it!" shrieked Akul'ka.

Malashka, too, wanted to say something, but could not utter a word for sheer laughter.

So the little girls ran along, laughing at the chip

The Children Wiser than the Elders

of wood as it bobbed up and down on the rivulet. And they ran right into the midst of the muzhiks.

The old woman perceived them, and said to the muzhiks:

"Do ye not fear God that ye wrangle so! Here, are all ye muzhiks quarrelling and striving together about these very children, while they themselves have long ago forgotten all about it, and are playing together again in all heartiness and loving kindness. They are wiser than you."

The muzhiks looked at the little girls and they were ashamed. And then the muzhiks began laughing at themselves, and separated, each man going to his own house.

"If ye do not become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

VII.—THE DEATH OF IVAN IL'ICH

I.

IN the large building devoted to judicial business during the interruption of the session in which the Meluisky affair was under consideration, the members of the Court and the Procurator had assembled in the cabinet of Ivan Egorovich Shebek, and were discussing the celebrated Krasovsky affair. Theodor Vasilevich, waxing warm, proved that there was no jurisdiction. Ivan Egorovich stuck to his opinion likewise. Peter Ivanovich, taking no part at first in the dispute, was simply glancing through the newspapers.

"Gentlemen!" said he, "Ivan Il'ich is dead."

"Impossible!"

"Read for yourselves, then, here it is," said he to Theodor Vasilevich, showing him the new number of the "Gazette," fresh and moist from the press.

Within a black border was printed: "Praskov'ya Theodorovna Golovina, with heart-felt regret, informs her relations and acquaintances of the death of her beloved husband and member of the High Court, Ivan Il'ich Golovin, which took place on the 4th of February of the current year. The funeral will take place at one o'clock in the afternoon."

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

Ivan Il'ich was a colleague of the gentlemen assembled there, and they all loved him. He had been ailing now for some weeks, and his malady was said to be incurable. His place had been left vacant, but the general impression was that, in case of his death, Aleksyeev might be nominated his successor, and either Vinnikov or Shtabel would take the place of Aleksyeev. Thus, on hearing of the death of Ivan Il'ich, the first thought of every one of the gentlemen assembled in that cabinet was: How would this death affect the members of the tribunal or their acquaintances in the way of change of position and promotion?

"Now I shall certainly get Shtabel's place or Vinnikov's," Theodor Vasilevich thought to himself. "It was promised to me a long time ago, and this promotion would mean an increment of 800 roubles, besides office fees."

"I must petition now for the transfer of my brother-in-law from Kaluga," thought Peter Ivanovich. "The wife will be very glad. Now she will not be able to say that I never do anything for her relations."

"I never thought he would get over it," I must say," said Peter Ivanovich aloud; "it is a great pity."

"What was really the matter with him?"

"The doctors can't exactly decide. Or, rather, they have decided, but all their opinions differ. When I saw him last it seemed to me that he was getting better."

"So I thought, and I have not seen him for some time. He was quite collected."

More Tales from Tolstol

"What were his circumstances?"

"It appears his wife has precious little. There's some trifle, I believe."

"One ought to call. They live a frightful distance off."

"Far away from you, no doubt, very far."

"Well, you cannot expect me to live in the suburbs," said Peter Ivanovich, smiling at Shebek. And they began talking of how great the distances were in the city, and then resumed the session.

Independently of the potential permutations and transfers likely to result in official circles from this death, the mere fact of the death itself of a close acquaintance excited, as usual, in all who heard it, a feeling of satisfaction that the hearers survived.

"Ah! he has died, and here am I alive," was what everyone thought or felt. Moreover, the close acquaintances, including the so-called friends of Ivan Il'ich, on this occasion involuntarily reflected that now they would have to fulfil the very tiresome obligations of propriety, and attend the *Panikhida*,* besides waiting upon the widow with their condolences.

The nearest neighbours were Theodor Vasilevich and Peter Ivanovich.

Peter Ivanovich was a member of the College of Jurisprudence, and considered himself under obligations to Ivan Il'ich.

After communicating to his wife at dinner the news of the death of Ivan Il'ich, and of the idea and the possibility of transferring his own brother-in-law into

* Mass for the repose of the soul of the deceased.

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

their circle, Ivan Ivanovich sighed sincerely, put on his frock-coat, and went to the house of Ivan Il'ich.

At the entrance to the quarters of Ivan Il'ich stood a carriage and two coachmen. Below, in the ante-chamber, near the coat-stand, leaning against the wall, was the glazed lid of the coffin, adorned with tassels and galloon, and furbished up with powder to look like new. Two ladies in black were taking off their furs. One was the sister of Ivan Il'ich, whom he knew, the other was a stranger. Peter Ivanovich's colleague, Schwarz, was coming downstairs, and from the top step saw the new arrival; he stopped short, and winked at him, as much as to say: "Ivan Il'ich has made a mess of it; what have we got to do with it?"

Schwarz's face, with its English whiskers, and his long, lean figure in its frock-coat, had, as usual, an air of refined solemnity, and this solemnity, always diametrically opposed to the humorous character of Schwarz, had here a peculiar piquancy. So, at any rate, thought Peter Ivanovich.

Peter Ivanovich let the ladies go on before him, and slowly ascended the staircase behind them. Schwarz did not descend, but remained at the top. Peter Ivanovich understood why: he wanted to arrange with him where they were to meet to-day. The ladies went up the staircase to the widow, but Schwarz, with his strong lips in a serious pose, and a waggish look, indicated by a movement of the brows that the room where the corpse lay was to the right.

Peter Ivanovich, as was always the case with him, entered with a feeling of uncertainty as to what he

More Tales from Tolstoi

ought to do there. One thing he was quite certain of—one should never fail to cross oneself on such occasions. As to whether it was also necessary to genuflect, he was not quite sure, so he adopted a middle course: on entering the room he proceeded to cross himself, and just made a slight pretence of genuflecting. As much as this pantomime with his hands and head allowed him to do so, he glanced round the room. Two young men, one of them a gymnasiast, both apparently relatives, were coming out of the room, crossing themselves. An old woman was standing there immovably, and a lady, with pointedly arched brows, was saying something to her in a whisper. A *d'yachek*,* in a cassock, alert and emphatic, was reading something aloud, with an expression excluding all contradiction; the muzhik-waiter, Gerasim, passing in front of Peter Ivanovich with light steps, was strewing something on the floor. No sooner had he noticed this than Peter Ivanovich was sensible of the faint odour of a corpse. Last time he had called upon Ivan Il'ich, Peter Ivanovich had seen this muzhik in the cabinet; he served as a nurse, and Ivan Il'ich was particularly fond of him. Peter Ivanovich kept on crossing himself, and slightly genuflecting in a central position, between the coffin, the *d'yachek*, and the images on the wall in the corner. Presently, when this action of crossing himself seemed to him to have lasted quite long enough, he stopped short, and began to look at the corpse.

The corpse lay particularly heavily, as is the

* Church singer

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

way with corpses, its stark-cold members sinking inwardly towards the bottom of the coffin, with the head projecting somewhat from the pillow, and prominently exhibited, as corpses always do exhibit, its yellow waxen forehead with the bald patches on the emaciated temples, and the prominent nose almost embedded in the upper lip. He had changed very much. He was even thinner than when Peter Ivanovich had last seen him ; but, as is the case with all corpses, the face had become handsomer, more distinguished looking, than it had been in life—that was the most noticeable change. On the face there was an expression which said that what it was necessary to do had been done, and done rightly. Moreover, in the expression of the face there was something besides, either a reproach or a recollection, of something in life. This recollection seemed to Peter Ivanovich incongruous, or, at least, inapplicable to him. He had an unpleasant sort of feeling, and therefore Peter Ivanovich hastily crossed himself once more, and, as it seemed to him, much too hastily and incompatibly with decent observance, and he turned and went towards the door. Schwarz was awaiting him in the vestibule, with his legs stretched far apart and drumming with both hands on the sides of his top hat. One glance at the humorous, wholesome, and elegant figure of Schwarz quite refreshed Peter Ivanovich. Peter Ivanovich understood that he, Schwarz, stood high above all that, and refused to submit to depressing influences. A single glance of his said : The incident of the *panikhida* of Ivan Il'ich is absolutely no sufficient occasion for the interruption

More Tales from Tolstol

of the recognised order of things; in other words, nothing could interfere with the shuffling of a pack of cards that very evening, and the dealing them out, while the lackeys were putting four freshly lighted candles in their proper places; and, in general, there was no reason for supposing that this incident could prevent us from spending together a pleasant evening to-day as on all other days. He said as much to Peter Ivanovich as he passed by, and invited him to join them in a card party at Theodor Vasilevich's. But, plainly, it was not the fate of Peter Ivanovich to amuse himself that evening. Praskov'ya Thedorovna, a short, fat woman, and, despite every architectural effort of her own in the contrary direction, expanding downwards from the shoulders, all in black, with a lace hood, and with just the same strangely raised eyebrows as the lady standing before the coffin, came out of her apartments with other ladies, and, conducting them to the dead man's door, said:

"The *panikhida* will take place immediately, go in!"

Schwarz, bowing indefinitely, remained where he was, obviously neither declining nor accepting this invitation. Praskov'ya Thedorovna, observing Peter Ivanovich, sighed, came straight towards him, took his hand, and said:

"I know that you were a sincere friend of Ivan Il'ich," and kept looking at him, expecting from him actions corresponding with these words.

Peter Ivanovich knew that just as it had been necessary to cross himself a little time ago, so now

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

it was necessary to press the lady's hand, sigh, and say :

"Believe me, I was indeed."

And he did so. And, having so done, he felt that the result desired was obtained—he was touched and she was touched.

"Come, before they begin in there, I want to have a little talk with you," said the widow ; "give me your hand."

Peter Ivanovich gave his hand, and they proceeded together to an inner apartment, past Schwarz, who gave Peter Ivanovich a melancholy wink.

"It's all up with our game ! Don't try and come, we'll look out for another partner," was what his waggish look said.

Peter Ivanovich sighed, still more deeply and sadly, and Praskov'ya Theodorovna gratefully pressed his arm. Entering her drawing-room, tapestried in pink cretonne, and lit by a dim shaded lamp, they sat down at the table, she on the divan, and Peter Ivanovich on a low seat with disordered springs and irregularly disposed down-stuffing, which gave way beneath him. Praskov'ya Theodorovna would have insisted on his taking another seat, but reflected that such insistence was incongruous with her situation, and thought better of it. As he sat down on the soft cushioned seat, Peter Ivanovich called to mind how Ivan Il'ich had designed the ornamentation of this room, and had consulted him about the pink cretonne with the green leaves. As she sat on the divan, after steering her way round the table (the whole drawing-room, by the way, was crowded with knick-knacks and

More Tales from Tolstol

furniture), the black lace of the widow's black dress caught in the carving of the table. Peter Ivanovich started up to unfasten it, and the downy cushion, freed from the pressure of his body, sprang up and bumped him. The widow herself stood up, and began to unfasten her lace, and Peter Ivanovich again sat down, suppressing the rebellious down-stuffing beneath him. But the widow did not quite detach herself, and Peter Ivanovich again rose up, and again the stuffing rose in rebellion and even the springs creaked. When everything was at last arranged, the lady drew forth a clean batiste pocket-handkerchief, and began to weep. But the episode of the lace and the struggle with the down cushion had somewhat cooled Peter Ivanovich, and he sat down somewhat sulkily. This awkward situation was interrupted by Sokolov, Ivan Il'ich's butler, with the announcement that the place in the churchyard which Praskov'ya Thedorovna had fixed upon would cost 200 roubles. She ceased to weep, and, with a victimised air, glanced at Peter Ivanovich, and remarked that it was a heavy price for her to pay. Peter Ivanovich made a deprecatory gesture, expressing his indubitable conviction that it could not very well be otherwise.

"Pray smoke!" she said, in a voice at once magnanimous and despondent, and she began discussing with Sokolov the question of the price of the grave.

Peter Ivanovich, as he smoked, heard how circumstantially she inquired about the prices of the different plots of ground, and fixed upon the one she ought to take. Then, having settled at last about the plot

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

of ground, she settled about the singers. Sokolov withdrew.

"I do everything myself," she said to Peter Ivanovich, pushing aside the albums lying on the table; and observing that the tobacco ash was threatening the table, she unobtrusively insinuated an ash tray close to Peter Ivanovich, without interrupting her conversation; "I should consider it hypocritical to assert that I cannot attend to practical things for sheer grief. On the contrary, if anything *can*, I will not say relieve, but distract my thoughts—it is this caring for him."

Again she got ready her handkerchief, as if making up her mind to weep, and suddenly, as if doing violence to herself, she shook her head and began to speak calmly.

"However, I have business to transact with you."

Peter Ivanovich bowed, without allowing free play to the springs of his cushioned seat, which immediately grew unruly beneath him.

"He suffered terribly at the last."

"Did he suffer very much?" inquired Peter Ivanovich.

"Ah, frightfully! At the last he never ceased to cry out—not for minutes, but for hours at a time. For three days in succession he cried out without any variation of voice. It was insupportable. I can't understand how I managed to stand it; we could hear him through three doors. Alas! What have I not endured!"

"But was he really conscious?" inquired Peter Ivanovich.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Yes," she whispered, "to the very last moment. He took leave of us a quarter of an hour before his death, and even asked us to bring Voloda to him."

The thought of the sufferings of the man he had known so intimately, first of all as a merry child and schoolfellow, and afterwards, when he had grown up, as a colleague, despite the unpleasant consciousness of his hypocrisy and the hypocrisy of this woman, suddenly terrified Peter Ivanovich. Again he saw before him that forehead, and the nose pressing upon the upper lip, and he had a feeling of horror on his own account.

"Three whole days of terrible suffering—and death. The same thing may befall me, suddenly, at any moment," he thought, and for an instant he had a sensation of horror. But immediately, he himself knew not how, there came to his assistance the usual reflection that this thing had happened to Ivan Il'ich and not to him; that it ought not, and could not, happen to him, and that, by giving way to the thought of it, he was only giving way to a gloomy tendency which he ought not to give way to, as Schwarz's face had plainly declared. And having made this reflection, Peter Ivanovich felt more comfortable, and began with interest to inquire about the particulars of the end of Ivan Il'ich, as if death was an accident to which only Ivan Il'ich was liable, but he himself was not.

After various discussions about the really terrible physical sufferings endured by Ivan Il'ich (Peter Ivanovich learnt these particulars simply because the torments of Ivan Il'ich were really upon the nerves of

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

Praskov'ya Thedorovna), the widow evidently thought it was necessary to come to the point.

"Alas! Peter Ivanovich," said she, "how hard it is, how terribly hard, how terribly hard," and she burst into tears.

Peter Ivanovich sighed, and waited for her to dry her eyes. When she had dried her eyes, he said: "Believe in my sympathy!" And again she began to talk, and told him what was evidently her real business with him: it amounted to asking him how she was to set about obtaining some money from the Treasury on the occasion of her husband's death. She pretended to be asking the advice of Peter Ivanovich as to getting a pension; but he saw that she already knew all about it down to the minutest particular—nay, knew, what he did not know, the best means of extorting everything possible from the Treasury, with her husband's death as a pretext. What she really wanted to know was, whether it were possible, somehow or other, to extract still a little more money than was strictly due? Peter Ivanovich tried to devise some such expedient, but, after making some suggestions, and even, for decency's sake, cursing the Government for its niggardliness, he said that it seemed to him nothing more could be got. Then she sighed, and obviously was beginning to cast about for some means of ridding herself of her visitor. He understood this, extinguished his cigarette, pressed her hand, and went into the antechamber.

In the dining-room, with the clocks with which Ivan Il'ich had been so pleased (he bought them in a *bric-à-brac* shop), Peter Ivanovich met the priest

More Tales from Tolstol

and some other acquaintances coming to the *panikhida*, and he saw a handsome young gentlewoman whom he also knew, the daughter of Ivan Il'ich. She was all in black. Her slim figure seemed slimmer than ever. She had a gloomy, resolute, almost angry look. She bowed to Peter Ivanovich as if she were to blame for something. Behind the daughter, with just the same aggrieved look, stood an acquaintance of Peter Ivanovich, a rich young man, employed in the Courts, her *fiancé*, as Peter Ivanovich understood. He bowed to them with a dispirited expression, and was about to make his way into the dead man's room, when there appeared on the top of the staircase the figure of the son of the house, the gymnasiast, frightfully like Ivan Il'ich. It was Ivan Il'ich as a youth, as Peter Ivanovich remembered him when he was a law student. His eyes were all red with weeping, and just like the eyes of dirty little boys of thirteen or fourteen. The youth, on perceiving Peter Ivanovich, began to frown, half severely, half shamefacedly. Peter Ivanovich nodded to him, and proceeded into the dead man's room. The *panikhida* began—lights, groans, incense, tears, sobs. Peter Ivanovich stood there, with puckered brows, gazing in front of him at his feet. Not once did he look at the corpse, and to the very end did not once give way to softening influences, and was one of the first to go out. There was nobody in the ante-chamber. Gerasim, the butler's assistant, came running out of the room of the deceased, fumbled with his strong hands over all the pelisses in order to get at the pelisse of Peter Ivanovich, and handed it to him.

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

"Well, Gerasim, my friend!" said Peter Ivanovich, for the sake of saying something, "a sad affair, isn't it?"

"It is the will of God; we shall all have to go through the same thing," said Gerasim, showing his white, compact, clodhopper teeth, and like a man in the whirl of strenuous work, he briskly opened the door, called to the coachman, helped Peter Ivanovich to his seat, and sprang back to the staircase, as if occupied by the thought of all he had still to do.

Peter Ivanovich felt a particular delight in breathing the fresh air, after the smell of the incense, the corpse, and the carbolic acid.

"Where to?" asked the coachman.

"It is not late. I'll go to Theodor Vasilevich's."

And so Peter Ivanovich went. And, in fact, he found them at the end of the first rubber, so he just came in time to take a hand.

II.

The past history of the life of Ivan Il'ich was most simple and ordinary, and, most terrible.

Ivan Il'ich died in his forty-eighth year, he was an official in the Law Courts. He was the son of an official who had made his way in St. Petersburg through various Ministries and Departments, following a career which brings people into a certain position from which, although it has clearly been proved that they are unfit for any sort of real service, they cannot be discharged by reason of their long

More Tales from Tolstol

past services and the rank to which they have attained ; and, therefore, they get fictitious sinecures, to which by no means fictitious thousands—from six to ten—are attached, on which they go on living to an advanced old age.

Such a man was Privy Councillor Il'ya Efimovich Golovin, a superfluous member of various superfluous institutions.

He had three sons. Ivan Il'ich was his second son. The eldest son went through the same career as his father, only in another Ministry, and was already drawing near to that period of official life which is rewarded by a lucrative sinecure. The third son was a failure. He had failed in various places, and was now employed on the railway ; and his father and his brothers, and, more particularly, his brothers' wives, not only did not like to meet him, but, except when it was absolutely impossible to do so, altogether ignored his existence. Ivan Il'ich was looked upon as *le phoenix de la famille*. He was not so cold and careful as his elder brother, but not such a desperate character as the younger. He was the happy medium—a sensible, vivacious, amiable, respectable man. He was educated for the law, along with his younger brother. The younger brother did not finish his studies, and was expelled from the fifth class, but Ivan Il'ich did well. In the law schools he was already what he was to be in the future all his life—a capable man, gay, good-natured, and sociable, but severely scrupulous in doing what he considered his duty, and he considered as his duty whatever highly placed people looked upon as such. Neither as a

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

youth, nor as a grown-up man, was he ever a place-hunter, yet there was this about him from his very earliest years : as a fly is attracted to a candle, so he was always drawn towards the highest placed people in his own particular sphere, appropriated their ways, their views of life, and established amicable relations with them. All the distractions of childhood and youth passed him by without leaving any particular trace upon him ; he yielded to sensuality, to ambition, and, finally, while in the higher classes, to liberalism, but always within certain limits, which his feelings of propriety indicated to him beforehand.

It was while he was a law student that he had indulged himself in things which he had regarded as disgusting before he did them, and which filled him with self loathing at the very time when he was doing them ; but, subsequently, perceiving that such things were done even by people in the highest positions, and were not considered bad, he himself did not indeed regard them as good, but simply forgot about them altogether, and never worried himself by thinking about them.

Quitting the schools of jurisprudence when he had risen to the tenth class, and receiving from his father money for his uniform, Ivan Il'ich ordered a suit from the fashionable tailor, Sharmer, hung on his watch chain a medal with the inscription, *respice finem* ; took leave of his principals and his instructors ; dined with his comrades once or twice at Dinons ; and with a new modish trunk, linen, suits of clothes, toilet and shaving requisites, and a plaid, ordered and paid for at the very best shops, he set off for the provinces,

More Tales from Tolstol

to take the place of confidential clerk to the Governor which his father had obtained for him.

In the provinces Ivan Il'ich contrived to make his position as easy and pleasant as it had been in the schools of jurisprudence. He worked hard, made a career for himself, and at the same time amused himself pleasantly and respectably. Occasionally, he was despatched by the Government on tours of investigation, always observing a dignified bearing towards both high and low, always remarkable for a scrupulous and incorruptible integrity of which he could not fail to be proud, and satisfactorily accomplishing every commission entrusted to him, more especially those relating to the dissenters.

Despite his youth and a natural bias towards light gaiety, in all business relations connected with the service he was extraordinarily firm, official, and even severe; but in society he was frequently sportive and witty, and always good-humoured, gentlemanly, and *bon enfant*, as his chief and his chief's wife, with whom he was always at home, used to say.

There was a liaison with one of the ladies who had been attracted to the elegant jurist in the provinces; there was also a little milliner; there were also drinking-parties with casual wing-adjudants, and excursions into a certain remote street after supper; there were also some underhand services rendered to the chief, and even to the wife of the chief; but all this was carried off with such an air of good breeding that it was impossible to give it a bad name, so it was all put down as a necessary part of the French postulate, *il faut que jeunesse se passe*. It was

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

all carried on with clean hands, in clean shirts, with French words, and, the main thing, in the very highest society, consequently with the sanction of persons of the highest rank.

This was the course of Ivan Il'ich's life for five years, and then there was a change in the service. New judicial departments appeared, and new men were required to fill them.

And Ivan Il'ich became one of these new men.

The post of investigating magistrate was offered to Ivan Il'ich, and Ivan Il'ich accepted it, notwithstanding the fact that this place was in another Government, and he would have to break off his existing relations and establish new ones. Ivan Il'ich's friends showed their appreciation of him; they laid their heads together, presented him with a silver cigarette holder, and off he went to his new appointment.

• As an investigating magistrate, Ivan Il'ich was just as *comme il faut* and gentlemanly as before, sensibly keeping his official obligations and his private life quite apart, and inspiring general respect, as became a civil servant with a special commission. Indeed, the office of magistrate was much more interesting and attractive to Ivan Il'ich than his previous appointment. In his previous appointment it had been very pleasant in his fashionable uniform, and with a free and easy gait, to stroll past the tremulous and expectant crowd of petitioners and minor official personages awaiting an audience outside, who envied him the privilege of going straight into the chief's private room, and sitting with him

More Tales from Tolstol

over cigarettes and tea ; but there were very few people who directly depended upon his good pleasure. Such people were only the subordinate local magistrates and the dissenters who overwhelmed him with petitions, and he loved to converse with such dependent folks politely, nay, almost as a comrade ; he loved to make them feel that he, who could have crushed them if he liked, preferred to treat them amicably and in quite a homely way. Then, however, there were very few of such people. But now that he was an investigating magistrate, Ivan Il'ich felt that all, all without exception, even the most important, self-satisfied people—all of them were in his hands, and that he had only to write certain words on a piece of headed paper, and the most important, self-satisfied person would instantly be brought before him, either as a criminal or a witness, and, unless he chose to ask him to sit down, would have to stand before him and answer his questions. Ivar Il'ich never abused his authority, on the contrary, he tried to soften its expression ; but the consciousness of this authority, and of his power to soften it, constituted, so far as he was concerned, the principal interest and attraction of his new office. In his own department, especially in his judicial investigations, Ivan Il'ich very speedily adopted the plan of ignoring all circumstances not directly concerning the service, and of presenting even the most complicated affair in such a form as only superficially to express it on paper, at the same time completely excluding his personal views, and especially observing all the requisite formalities. This was a new way of doing things.

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

On being transferred to a new town, in the capacity of examining magistrate, Ivan Il'ich made fresh acquaintances, contracted fresh ties, established himself anew, and adopted a somewhat different tone. He took up a position of dignified aloofness as regards the governmental authorities, and chose a better circle from among the magistrates and rich gentry dwelling in the town, and adopted a tone of slight disapproval towards the Government—a tone of moderate liberalism and enlightened citizenship. Moreover, without making any change in the elegance of his toilet, Ivan Il'ich, in his new dignity, ceased to shave closely, and gave his beard liberty to grow as it liked.

The life of Ivan Il'ich in this new town arranged itself very pleasantly. The society in which he lived, and which was for ever skirmishing with the Governor, was good and amicable, his salary was larger, and not a little delight was added to life in those days by whist, which Ivan Il'ich now began to play, having the capacity of playing at cards gaily, with a quick eye for combinations, and with considerable finesse, so that, generally speaking, he was always on the winning side.

After two years of service in the new town, Ivan Il'ich encountered his future wife. Praskov'ya Theodorovna Mikhel was a most fascinating, sensible, brilliant girl, belonging to Ivan Il'ich's own circle. In the number of his other pastimes and relaxations from the cares of a magistrate, Ivan Il'ich included his light and sportive relations with Praskov'ya Theodorovna

More Tales from Tolstor

Ivan Il'ich, as a subordinate official, generally danced, as a judge he only danced on exceptional occasions. It was, as if he said: Though I have now different functions, and am in the fifth class, nevertheless, if a dance must be danced, I will show that I can do better than others even in that respect. So, now and then, he would dance of an evening with Praskov'ya Thedorovna, and it was principally during these dances that he made a conquest of Praskov'ya Thedorovna. She fell in love with him. Ivan Il'ich had no clear, fixed intention of marrying; but when the girl fell in love with him, he put himself this question: "Why, indeed, should I not marry?"

The girl, Praskov'ya Thedorovna, was of a good old family, and not bad-looking; she also had a little property of her own. Ivan Il'ich might calculate on making a much more brilliant match, yet this was not a bad match. Ivan Il'ich had his salary, and she, so he reckoned, had about the same. Her family was a good one, and she was a gentle, very pretty, and thoroughly well-principled woman. To say that Ivan Il'ich married because he was in love with his *fiancée*, and found in her a sympathy with his views of life, would have been as inaccurate as to say that he married because the people of his circle had approved of the match. Ivan Il'ich married for two reasons: it was pleasant to him to acquire such a wife, and, at the same time, he did what people of the highest position considered the proper thing to do.

So Ivan Il'ich married.

The very process of marriage and the first period of his wedded life, with the conjugal caresses, the new

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

furniture, the new plate, the new linen, right up to the pregnancy of his wife, passed very well, so that Ivan Il'ich really began to think that his marriage would not interrupt that light, pleasant, merry, and always dignified mode of life approved of by society, which Ivan Il'ich regarded as his own proper life in general, but would even add to its charms. But now, during the first months of his wife's pregnancy, there came to light something so new, unexpected, unpleasant, difficult, and unbecoming, that he could not have anticipated it and never could get over it.

His wife, without any occasion for it, or so it seemed to Ivan Il'ich, and from pure *de gaieté de cœur*, as he phrased it, began to destroy the equilibrium and dignity of his life: without the slightest cause she began to be jealous, exacted the utmost attention from him, tried to pick quarrels on all occasions, and had unpleasant and even coarse scenes with him.

At first Ivan Il'ich did his best to free himself from the unpleasantness of this situation by adopting the same easy and dignified way of treating life in general which had served him in such good stead before; he tried to ignore his wife's state of mind, and continued to live, as before, easily and pleasantly; he invited parties of friends to his house, and tried going to the club and accepting invitations himself. But his wife on one occasion abused him so coarsely and energetically, and so persistently continued so to abuse him every time he did not comply with her demands, evidently determined not to desist till he should have submitted, or in other words, should have consented to sit moping at home like herself, that Ivan Il'ich

More Tales from Tolstol

grew alarmed. He understood now that conjugal life—at any rate, conjugal life with his wife—was not always the same thing as a pleasant and dignified life; but, on the contrary, often made such a life impossible, and that, therefore, it was necessary to compensate himself for the loss of it. So Ivan Il'ich began seeking such compensation. His official position was the part of his life which impressed Praskov'ya Theodorovna the most, and Ivan Il'ich, by means of his official position and the obligations resulting therefrom, began a contest with his wife in her endeavours to limit his independent existence.

The birth of the infant, the various attempts to nourish it, the various ensuing disappointments, the illnesses, real and imaginary, of mother and child, in all of which Ivan Il'ich was supposed to sympathize, though he knew nothing at all about it—all these things made it more and more urgently necessary for Ivan Il'ich to try and form another world for himself quite outside the family circle.

Thus, in proportion as his wife became more and more irritating and exacting, Ivan Il'ich more and more transferred the centre of gravity of his existence to his official existence. He began to love his office still more, and became more ambitious than he had ever been before.

Very soon, not more than a year after his marriage, Ivan Il'ich understood that marriage, though generally regarded as one of the chief commodities of life, is in reality a very complicated and difficult affair, with regard to which, if he wished to do his duty, that is to say, lead the decent sort of life approved of by

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

society, he must take up a definite position, as he had done in his official life.

And Ivan Il'ich succeeded in taking up such definite position in his married life. He required of his family life only those domestic commodities, *e.g.*, a dinner, a housewife, a bed, etc., which it was able to give, and, in particular, that decency of external forms which is desiderated by public opinion. For the rest he looked for cheerful amiability, and was very grateful if he found it. But whenever he encountered opposition or peevishness, he immediately went off to his separate, penned-off world of official life, where everything was pleasant.

Ivan Il'ich was valued as a good official, and in three years he was made the colleague of the procurator. Fresh obligations, their importance, the power of examining everyone before the tribunal and putting them in prison, the publicity of his speeches, the success which attended Ivan Il'ich in his new capacity—all this made the public service still more attractive to him.

Children continued to arrive. His wife grew still more cross and peevish, but the position which Ivan Il'ich had successfully assumed with regard to his domestic life made him almost invulnerable to her peevishness.

After seven years of service in one town, Ivan Il'ich was transferred to another government as procurator. They migrated thither; there was little money, and his wife did not like the place to which they had been transferred. The salary was larger, indeed, than before, but living was also dearer; moreover,

More Tales from Tolstol

two of their children died, and therefore family life became still more unpleasant to Ivan Il'ich.

Praskov'ya Thedorovna, in this new place, reproached her husband for every little mishap which happened. The greater part of the subjects, of conversation between the husband and wife, especially the education of the children, led to debates bordering on quarrels, and quarrels were ready to burst forth every moment. There remained only those rare periods of reviving affection which all consorts experience from time to time, but which do not last long. These were islets on which they rested for a time, only to embark again on the sea of covert hatred, which expressed itself in a mutual alienation. This alienation might have grieved Ivan Il'ich if he had considered that it ought not to be, but by this time he had come to recognise this situation not only as normal, but as the aim of his domestic existence. For it had now become his aim to free himself more and more from these unpleasantnesses, and give them an inoffensive and decent character; and he achieved his aim by spending less and less time in his family, and when he was forced to be there, he tried to alleviate his position by the presence of strangers. Ivan Il'ich's chief comfort was that he had his official employment. In the official world the whole interest of his life was concentrated. And this interest smoothed matters for him. The consciousness of his authority, of the power he had to ruin every man he wanted to ruin, even the external dignity of his entrance into Court, and his dealings with his subordinates, his success before his superiors and his

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

subordinates, and, the main thing, his masterly conduct of affairs, of which he was quite sensible—all this delighted him, and together with his intercourse with his colleagues, dinners, and whist, quite filled up his life. So, in general, the life of Ivan Il'ich continued to go on, as he thought it should go on, pleasantly and becomingly.

Thus, then, he continued to live for seven years. His eldest daughter was already sixteen; one more child had died, and there remained a little boy, a gymnasiast, the object of discord. Ivan Il'ich wanted to devote him to jurisprudence, and Praskov'ya Thedorovna, to spite him, sent him to the gymnasium. The daughter was educated at home, and promised well; the lad also did not do amiss with his studies.

III.

Thus proceeded the life of Ivan Il'ich for the space of seventeen years from the time of his marriage. He was already an old procurator who had rejected several offers, because he was expecting a more desirable post, when unexpectedly something disagreeable happened which completely ruined his tranquil existence. Ivan Il'ich was expecting the post of chief assessor in a university town, but a Mr. Goppe had been too quick for him, and got the place instead. Ivan Il'ich was very angry; he began to make reproaches, and quarrel with him and with his immediate superiors; a coldness sprang up between them, and at the next vacancy he was again passed over.

More Tales from Tofstol

This was in the year 1880. This particular year was a very heavy one in the life of Ivan Il'ich. In this year, it appeared, on the one hand, that his salary was not sufficient to live upon ; and, on the other hand, everyone seemed to ignore him, and, greatest, most cruel injustice of all from his point of view, his situation seemed to others to be quite what it ought to be. Even his father considered himself under no obligation to assist him. He had a feeling that they were all deserting him, considering his position, with a salary of 3,500 roubles, quite normal, and even a lucky one. He alone knew, what with the injustice that was being done him, and with the eternal jarrings of his wife, and with the debts he was beginning to make, living, as he did, beyond his means—he alone knew that his position was far from normal.

In the summer of this year, in order to economize, he took leave of absence, and went to spend the summer with his wife in the country at the house of Praskov'ya Theodorovna's brother.

Out of service in the country, Ivan Il'ich, for the first time in his life, experienced not merely ennui, but an unendurable depression, and arrived at the conclusion that to live like this was impossible, and that it was indispensable for him to adopt some decisive measure at once.

After passing a sleepless night, the whole of which Ivan Il'ich spent on the terrace, he resolved to go to St. Petersburg, and try to get transferred into another Ministry, in order to punish those persons who did not appreciate him.

On the following day, despite all the remonstrances

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

of his wife and brother-in-law, he went to St. Petersburg.

He went for one special purpose: to solicit a post with a salary of 5,000 roubles. He was not particular about the Ministry, or its tendencies, or the sort of work required from him. All he wanted was the post—a post worth 5,000 roubles, either in the Administrative Services, or in a bank, or a railway, or in connection with the charitable institutions of the Empress Mary, or even in the Customs—but the 5,000 salary was indispensable, and he was unalterably resolved to quit the Ministry where they did not appreciate him.

And behold! this excursion of Ivan Il'ich was crowned by amazing, unlooked-for success. In Kursk, Th. S. Ilin, an acquaintance of Ivan Il'ich, was promoted to the first class, and he communicated by telegram to the Governor of Kursk that a series of changes was impending just then in the Ministry to which he belonged, Ivan Semenovich succeeding to the post of Peter Ivanovich.

The projected change, besides its importance for Russia, had a particular significance for Ivan Il'ich, inasmuch as the newly promoted personage, Peter Petrovich, and evidently his friend, Zakhar Ivanovich, were in the highest degree favourable to Ivan Il'ich, and Zakhar Ivanovich was, moreover, a friend and colleague of Ivan Il'ich.

In Moscow the report was confirmed, and on arriving at St. Petersburg Ivan Il'ich met Zakhar Ivanovich, and received the promise of a safe place in his former Ministry, the Ministry of Justice.

More Tales from Tolstoi

In a week he telegraphed to his wife :

"Zakhar post of Miller on first announcement I receive the nomination."

Ivan Il'ich, thanks to this change of persons, unexpectedly received in his former Ministry such an important place that he stood two degrees higher than his colleagues : a salary of 5,000, and travelling fees to the amount of 3,000 more. All his rage against his former enemies and against the whole Ministry was forgotten, and Ivan Il'ich was completely happy.

Ivan Il'ich returned to the country more cheerful and contented than he had been for a long time. Praskov'ya Thedorovna was also pleased, and a truce was concluded between them. Ivan Il'ich had a lot to tell about the respect with which he had been treated at St. Petersburg, and how all they who had been his enemies had been humbled and now crouched before him ; how he was envied his new position, and especially how very much they all loved him at St. Petersburg.

Praskov'ya Thedorovna listened to all this, and made as if she believed it, and did not contradict him in anything, but was busy all the time making her own plans about the new style of life they should live in the city to which they had thus been transferred ; and Ivan Il'ich perceived with joy that these plans were his plans, that they agreed together, and that his thwarted life had reacquired a bright and genuine pleasantness and dignity corresponding with his wishes.

Ivan Il'ich arrived in the capital very shortly. He

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

had to assume his new office on September 10th, and besides that he required a little time to settle in his new home, to remove all his things from the country, to buy things that were wanted, and see to a good many other things ; in a word, to establish himself as he had already made up his mind to do, and as Praskov'ya Tedorovna had resolved to do likewise.

And now when everything had been arranged so comfortably, and when he and his wife had once more but one common object before them, and, despite the fact that they lived very little together, harmonised more amicably than they had ever done since the first year of their marriage, Ivan Il'ich thought of removing his family at once ; but his sister and brother-in-law, who had suddenly become particularly friendly and kinsmanlike towards Ivan Il'ich, would not hear of it, so Ivan Il'ich had to depart by himself.

Ivan Il'ich departed then, and the happy frame of mind produced by his success and his harmonious relations with his wife, each stimulating the other, never quitted him the whole time. He hit upon excellent quarters, the sort of dwelling he and his wife had long been dreaming about. Lofty, spacious reception rooms in the old style, a convenient grandiose cabinet, rooms for his wife and daughter, a class room for his son—as if expressly designed for them. Ivan Il'ich himself undertook all the arrangements, selected the carpets, bought the furniture—old-fashioned furniture in particular, which (he took care of that) was in a particularly *comme il faut* style—and the coverings of the furniture, and it all grew and grew into the ideal which he had set his mind on

More Tales from Tolstoi

attaining. When half his arrangements were completed, the general effect far exceeded his expectations. It presented that *comme il faut*, elegant, and uncommon character which satisfies every requisite when it is finished. In his slumbers he pictured to himself the drawing-room as it was going to be. Looking at the reception room, still incomplete, he already beheld the chimneypiece, the *ecran*, the *etagère*, those little chairs scattered about the room, those plates and plaques on the walls, and the bronzes when they should all be in their places. The thought pleased him how he would surprise Pasha and Lizan'ka, both of whom had taste in these matters. They never expected anything like this. He had, in particular, succeeded in discovering and buying cheap old things which gave to everything a particularly distinguished character. In his letters he purposely described everything as ~~more~~ ^{more} than it really was, in order to surprise them the more. All this occupied him so much that even his new post, much as he loved it, interested him far less than he had anticipated. At the sessions he attended he frequently had fits of absent-mindedness; he was thinking all the time whether the curtain-cornices were plain or ornamental. He was so taken up with this thought that he frequently took the trouble to rearrange the furniture and hang the curtains over again. Once, when he had mounted a ladder to show the unintelligent curtain-hanger how he wished the curtains draped, he stumbled and fell, but being vigorous and alert he managed to keep his feet, simply knocking his side against the handle of a frame. The bruise hurt him

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

a little, but the pain soon passed off. All this time, indeed, Ivan Il'ich felt particularly bright and well. He wrote: "I feel that fifteen of my years have leaped from off my shoulders." He thought he should have finished in September, but the business dragged on till the middle of October. By way of compensation, it was also most excellent; it was not only he that said it, everyone who saw it told him that it was so.

In reality, it was the same with him as it is with all not very rich people who wish to imitate the rich, and, as a matter of fact, only imitate one another: silk stuffs, black wood, flowers, carpets, and bronzes, dark and shining, all that sort of thing which all persons of a certain class do in order to resemble all other persons of the same class. And with him, too, it was all so much alike that there was absolutely nothing to attract attention, yet to him it all seemed something especial. When he met his family at the railway station, he conducted them to his illuminated, ready prepared quarters, and a lackey in a white choker opened the door leading into the flower-bedizened vestibule, and then they proceeded into the reception room and the cabinet, and ah'd and oh'd with satisfaction; and he felt very happy, and guided them everywhere, imbibed their praises, and was radiant with satisfaction. That same evening, after tea, Praskov'ya Thedorovna asked him, among other things, how he had come to fall, and he laughed and explained by pantomime how he had come flying through the air, and had frightened the curtain-hanger.

"I have not been a gymnast for nothing, anyone

More Tales from Tolstoi

else would have been killed, and I merely struck myself here ; if you touch it it pains, but it is passing away already, it is a simple bruise."

And they began to live in their new dwelling in which, as always happens when one has had time to turn round in a new house, they discovered that all they now really wanted was one more room, and if they only had more means—for, as usual, they now discovered that their income was short of a trifle of some 500 roubles—everything would be very well indeed. Especially pleasant was the first period of their residence in the new house, when everything was not quite complete, and a finishing touch had to be added or something had to be bought, or ordered, or re-arranged, or set to rights. And although there were some disagreements between husband and wife, both of them were so contented, and there was so much to be done, that the difference was always adjusted without any great quarrel. When, however, there was nothing more to be done, things began to be a little dull, and one or two little wants were felt, but by this time acquaintances were made, habits were formed, and life was full of its occupations.

Ivan Il'ich, after spending the morning in Court, would return to dinner, and at first his spirits were good, though he suffered a little from the worries of a new domicile. Every spot on the table-cloth, on the silk stuffs, a ragged tassel in the curtains—all these little things irritated him. He had spent so much labour on his household arrangements that every derangement of them was painful to him. Yet, on the whole, the life of Ivan Il'ich passed as, accord-

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

ing to his belief, life ought to pass—easily, gaily, becomingly. He rose at nine, drank his coffee, read his "Gazette," put on his demi-uniform, and went to Court. Here was piled up the harness in which he worked, and he readily adjusted himself to it. Petitioners, interrogatories in Court, the Court itself, sessions—public and administrative. In dealing with all this business, one had to know how to exclude everything crude—everything relating to life in the concrete—things which always impede the regular course of official affairs. It was necessary to guard against entering into anything but strictly official relations with people, and official relations had to be the one occasion for any dealings with them at all, and the relations themselves could be only official. For instance, a man might come and desire to be informed about something. Ivan Il'ich could have no relations with such an individual except in his official capacity; but if his relations with ~~this~~ man were official, and the terms of them were such as could be expressed on headed official paper, then within the limits of such official relations Ivan Il'ich would do all in his power for the man, and do it most emphatically, and at the same time observe the form of humane and friendly intercourse in the shape of politeness. Every cessation of intercourse carried with it the cessation of every other sort of intercourse. The capacity of isolating the official side of his character, so that it never interfered with his real life, was possessed by Ivan Il'ich in the highest degree, and long practice, combined with talent, enabled him to carry it out to such a degree that sometimes he even

More Tales from Tolstol

permitted himself, as a virtuoso, and by way of jest, to intermingle his human and his official relations. He indulged himself this way because he felt within himself the power, whenever he pleased, to make himself purely official again, and reject the human element. Ivan Il'ich managed this not only easily, pleasantly, and becomingly, but even artistically. In the intervals of business he smoked, drank tea, talked a little about politics, a little about affairs in general, a little about cards, and more than all about official nominations. And wearied, but with the feeling of a virtuoso playing his part—first violin in the orchestra—to perfection, he would then return home. At home he would find, perhaps, that his wife and daughter had gone out somewhere, or they had visitors; his son was at the gymnasium or preparing his lessons with his tutor, and getting up what is usually taught at gymnasiums. It was all very good. After dinner, if there were no guests, Ivan Il'ich would read a book which might happen to be much talked about, and in the evening would settle down to business, that is to say, would read papers, refer to the statutes, compare statements, and put them under their proper rubrics. This occupation neither bored nor amused him. If he felt bored it was possible to play at *vint*, but if there was no *vint*, business was always preferable to sitting alone with his wife with nothing to do. Ivan Il'ich's chief delights were the little dinners to which he invited men and women of high position in the world, and the intercourse he then had with such persons, though as for them it was what they were used to every day,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

for Ivan Il'ich's drawing-room was just like any other drawing-room.

On one occasion they even had an evening party with dancing. And Ivan Il'ich was very happy, and everything went off very well, except for a great quarrel with his wife about the pastry and sweets. Praskov'ya Theodorovna had her own plans, but Ivan Il'ich insisted upon getting everything from a good pastry cook, and ordered a lot of pastry, and the quarrel arose because a lot of tarts remained over, and the pastry cook's account came to forty-five roubles. The quarrel was a big quarrel, and very unpleasant, because Praskov'ya Theodorovna said: "You're a silly fool." And he clutched hold of his head, and at the bottom of his heart he seriously thought for a moment or two of a separation. But the evening itself was a happy one. The best society was present, and Ivan Il'ich danced with the Princess Trufinova, the sister of the foundress of the celebrated charitable institution: "Take thou away my grief." His official delights were the delights of pride, his official delights were the delights of vanity, but the real joys of Ivan Il'ich were the joys of playing at *vint*. He confessed that after all, and despite whatever unpleasantness there might be in his life, the joy which like a light burned before all others was to sit down with good players and amiable partners at *vint*, four-handed *vint* of course (five-handed *vint* did not do nearly so well, though Ivan Il'ich pretended that he loved that too), and to play a sensible, serious game (when you had a good hand), and then to have supper and drink a glass of wine. And when

More Tales from Tolstol

he went to bed after *vint*, especially when he had won a little (it was unpleasant to win a good deal), Ivan Il'ich would lie down to sleep in particularly good spirits.

Thus they lived. The very best circle formed around them, and important people and young people were among their visitors.

As regards the circle of their acquaintances, husband, wife, and daughter were quite agreed, and by tacit consent they shook off and rid themselves of all former various acquaintances and kinsfolks—the rabble, so to speak, who, along with the new people, flitted about the drawing-room with the new Japanese plaques on the walls. Very soon the second-rate friends ceased altogether to flit about their drawing-room, and only the very best people frequented the house of the Golivins. Young people came courting little Liza^{*}, and Petrishchev, the son of Dmitry Ivanovich Petrishchev, the judge, and his sole heir, began to pay attention to Liza, so that Ivan Il'ich already began to consult Praskov'ya Theodorovna as to whether they should let them go out driving together in a troika, or make a scene? Thus they continued to live. And everything went on as if it would ever be so, and everything was very good.

IV.

They were all well. Ivan Il'ich sometimes said indeed that he had a bad taste in his mouth, and something was not quite right, but one could hardly call that illness.

* Little Liza.

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

But this little indisposition happened to increase, and passed, not yet into downright illness, but into a feeling of constant oppression in the side, accompanied by lowness of spirits. This lowness of spirits kept on increasing and increasing, and began to destroy that easy, pleasant, and decorous manner of life which had become an institution in the family of the Golivins. The husband and wife began to wrangle more and more frequently, and soon all ease and pleasantness fell away from them, and decorum alone remained, and that was only preserved with the greatest difficulty. Scenes again became more and more frequent between them, and at last there were only rare occasions when the husband and wife could meet together without an open rupture. And Praskov'ya Thedorovna said, and now not without reason, that her husband was very difficult to get on with. With her customary habit of exaggeration, she maintained that he had always had a frightful temper, and that it was only her good nature that had enabled her to put up with it for these twenty years. It was true that now, at any rate, he was the first to begin to quarrel. His peevishness always began before dinner, and often, and especially just when he had begun to eat, after the soup, for instance. He would then remark that this dish or that was spoilt, and did not taste as it ought to taste, or his son would put his elbows on the table, or his daughter's hair was untidy. And he blamed Praskov'ya Thedorovna for everything. At first, Praskov'ya Thedorovna was offended, and said unpleasant things to him, but once or twice at the beginning of dinner he had flown into

More Tales from Tolstol

such a rage that she understood that this was a morbid condition which expressed itself in him whenever he partook of food, so she calmed herself, ceased to be irritated, and merely hastened to finish the meal as soon as possible. Praskov'ya Thedorovna made a very great merit of her meekness. Having arrived at the conclusion that her husband had a frightful temper, and was making her life wretched, she began to pity herself. And the more she pitied herself, the more she hated her husband. She began to wish that he would die, but she could not wish this because then there would be no salary. And this irritated her still more against him. She accounted herself dreadfully miserable, principally because even his death would be no deliverance for her, and it irritated her to conceal this feeling, and this hidden irritation still further increased her irritation at him.

After ~~one~~ of these scenes, in which Ivan Il'ich had been particularly unjust, and, after which he said, by way of explanation, that he had certainly been irritable, but that it was because he did not feel well, she said to him that if he were ill he ought to be cured, and insisted that he should go and see a famous doctor.

He went. Everything turned out just as he had expected, everything was as it always is. And the expectation and the intrinsic importance of the doctor, an acquaintance of his, was the same sort of thing which he knew by experience in the Courts, and the tapping and the auscultations, and the questions, demanding foregone and obviously unnecessary answers, and the doctor's look of importance,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

suggesting: Look here, my dear sir, you just rely upon us, and we'll put everything to rights; we know all about it, and will undoubtedly put everything to rights in one and the same way for everybody you like, no matter who he is—the whole process was just the same as it was in the Law Courts. Just as he in the Law Courts put on an impressive air with his subordinates, so also did the famous doctor put on an impressive air with him.

The doctor said: "So and so and so and so proves that so and so and so and so is the matter with your inside, but if this is not confirmed by the examination of so and so and so, then it is necessary to assume so and so and so and so. If, then, we assume so and so and so and so, then of course"—and so on and so on. So far as Ivan Il'ich was concerned, only a single question was of any importance: "Is my condition dangerous or not?" But the doctor altogether ignored this inconvenient question. From the doctor's point of view, this question was a silly one, and not under consideration; the balancing of contingencies was all that existed for him—kidney complaint, chronic catarrh, and diseases of the lower gut, for instance. It was no question of the life of Ivan Il'ich, but it was a dispute as between the kidneys and the intestines. And this dispute the doctor, in the most brilliant fashion, before Ivan Il'ich's very eyes, decided in favour of the intestines, at the same time making a reservation to the effect that an examination of his urine might furnish fresh indications, and that then the affair would be thoroughly investigated. All this was to an iota

More Tales from Tolstoi

exactly the same sort of thing that Ivan Il'ich himself had done thousands of times in the same brilliant manner when he had had to do with persons before the Court. The doctor made his *résumé* just as brilliantly, and triumphantly, nay, even gaily regarded the doomed man over his spectacles. From the doctor's *résumé* Ivan Il'ich drew the conclusion that he was in a bad way, and that to the doctor, alas! and to everyone else it was all one, but that he, Ivan Il'ich, was certainly in a bad way. And this inference morbidly affected Ivan Il'ich, exciting within him a feeling of great pity for himself, and of great anger against the doctor who could be so indifferent in such an important question.

But he said nothing, but got up, laid his money on the table, and remarked with a sigh: "We sick people, no doubt, often ask you doctors untimely questions, but tell me now, plainly, is this illness dangerous or not?"

The doctor regarded him severely with one eye through his spectacles, as if he would say: Prisoner at the bar, if you do not keep within the strict limits of regularly prescribed questions, I shall be obliged to take measures for your removal from the Court.

"I have already told you what I considered necessary and befitting," said the doctor. "An examination will show us anything further." And the doctor bowed.

Ivan Il'ich left the house slowly, sat down wearily in his sledge, and went home. All the way there he never ceased pondering over what the doctor had said, trying to translate all those involved, obscure, scientific

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

sentences into simple language, and read into them an answer to the question: Am I in a bad way—a very bad way—or is it nothing after all? And it seemed to him that the meaning of all that the doctor had said was that he *was* in a bad way. Everything in the streets struck Ivan Il'ich as miserable. The coachmen were miserable, the houses were miserable, the passengers and the shops were miserable. This pain—this dull, dumb pain, never ceasing for an instant, seemed, taken in connection with the enigmatical words of the doctor, to have acquired a fresh and far more serious significance. And Ivan Il'ich now listened to it with a new and heavy feeling.

He got home, and told his wife all about it. His wife listened, but in the middle of their conversation his daughter came in with her hat on; she had arranged to go out with her mother. With an effort she prevailed upon herself to sit down and listen to this tiresome affair, but did not stay long, and her mother even did not hear it to the end.

"Well, I'm very glad," said his wife, "that now you will take medicine regularly. Give me the prescription, I'll send Gerasim to the chemist." And she went away to dress.

He scarce breathed so long as she was there, but when she went out he drew a deep sigh.

"Well," said he to himself, "possibly it's nothing yet, after all."

He began to take the medicine, and followed the directions of the doctor, which were modified in consequence of the examination of the urine. But, on one occasion, it so happened that during this

More Tales from Tolstol

examination, and in what ought to have been the course of procedure after it, some blunder, some confusion took place. It was impossible to get at the doctor, and it turned out that something had been done which the doctor hadn't ordered. Either he had forgotten, or lied, or hidden something from him.

Nevertheless, Ivan Il'ich continued to follow the doctor's prescriptions all the same, and in so doing found for a time some relief.

The principal occupation of Ivan Il'ich, ever since his visit to the doctor, was the exact observance of the doctor's prescriptions as regards hygiene, the taking of drugs, and close attention to his malady and the whole mechanism of his organism. The chief interests of Ivan Il'ich were people's diseases and people's healths. When they spoke about illnesses in his presence, or of people who were dying, or of wonderful cures, or especially of the disease from which he was suffering, he, trying all the time to conceal his emotion, listened eagerly, asked questions, and applied the answers he got to his own case.

His pain did not diminish, but Ivan Il'ich did violence to his own convictions in order to persuade himself that he was better. And he was able to deceive himself so long as nothing excited him. But no sooner did he have any unpleasantness with his wife, or any official bother, or bad cards at *vint*, then immediately he felt the full force of his illness. Formerly, he had put up with these little mishaps, and struggled against them, waiting for things to right themselves, and for better luck; but now every

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

contretemps floored him, and drove him to utter despair. He would say to himself: "Look there, now ! 'no sooner do I feel a little better, no sooner does the medicine begin to have a good effect, than this cursed misadventure or unpleasantness comes along and spoils everything. . . ." And he was furious at the misadventure, or at the people who caused him unpleasantness, and threw him back again ; and he felt how these bursts of passion took it out of him, but he could not restrain himself. It would seem as if it ought to have been quite clear to him that this exasperation with circumstances and people could only increase his illness, and, therefore, he ought not to pay any attention to disagreeable circumstances, yet he came to the diametrically opposite conclusion : he said to himself that he needed quiet, and was furious at everything which disturbed this quiet, and flew into a passion at the very slightest interference. His condition grew even worse when he took to reading medical books and consulting the doctor ; but this growing worse was so gradual that he was able to deceive himself by comparing one day with another, so slight was the difference from day to day. But, whenever he consulted the doctor, it seemed to him that he was going from bad to worse, and pretty rapidly, too ; yet, notwithstanding this, he consulted the doctor continually.

This month he visited another medical celebrity. The second celebrity said almost the same thing as the first celebrity, only he put the same questions in a different way. And the consultation with this celebrity only increased the doubt and fear of Ivan

More Tales from Tolstol

Il'ich. A friend of a friend of his—a very good doctor—diagnosed his malady quite differently, and notwithstanding that he promised a cure, still further confused Ivan Il'ich with his questions and directions, besides confirming his doubts. A homœopathist diagnosed the malady differently from any of the others, and gave him spécial medicines, which Ivan Il'ich, in profound secrecy, took for a week. And after a week, not feeling any relief, and losing confidence both in his former drugs and in his new ones, he fell into a still more woeful condition. Once a distinguished lady told him about cures effected by means of ikons. Ivan Il'ich caught himself listening intently, and believing in the story as an actual fact. The incident alarmed him. "Is it possible that my intellect is failing me?" he asked himself. "Rubbish! nonsense! I must not give way to fancies, but must choose one doctor, and regularly follow his prescriptions. I'll do so, and there's an end of it. I'll think no more about it, but will take his drugs for a whole year. And then we shall see. And now I have done with all this vacillation!" It was easy to say this, but impossible to accomplish it. All along, the pain in his side was tormenting him, and, as if growing in strength, it began to be more insistent; the taste in his mouth became stronger, it seemed to him as if a disgusting smell proceeded from the inside of his mouth, and his appetite and strength failed him more and more. It was impossible to deceive himself any longer: something strange, novel, and so important, that nothing of anything like the same importance had ever happened in Ivan Il'ich's life before, was

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

accomplishing itself within him. And he alone knew of it; all those around him did not or would not understand it, and thought that everything in the world was going on just the same as before. This tortured Ivan Il'ich almost more than anything else. The people at home, principally his wife and daughter, who were in the very thick of their social engagements, did not understand it at all, he could see that, and were quite offended with him for being so glum and exacting, as if he were to be blamed for that. Although they tried to hide it, he could see that he was in their way, but that his wife had forced herself to take up a certain attitude with regard to his complaint, and adhered to it, independently of whatever he might say or do. This attitude of hers was something of this sort: "You know," she would say to her acquaintances, "Ivan Il'ich cannot, like all other good people, strictly adhere to the doctor's prescriptions. To-day he takes his drops and eats what he is ordered to eat, and will lie down a bit; and then to-morrow, if I don't look after him, he will forget to take them; he will eat sturgeon (which is forbidden him), and will sit down to cards for a whole hour."

"When did I?" Ivan Il'ich said angrily at Peter Ivanovich's.

"In the evening with Shebek."

"What does it matter? I cannot sleep for pain."

"Very well; whatever may be done, you will never be cured, and you'll keep on giving us all this anxiety."

More Tales from Tolstol

This extraneous attitude of Praskov'ya Thedorovna towards the sick man, as expressed to others and to himself, implied that the illness was all Ivan Il'ich's own fault, and was, in fact, a fresh unpleasantness which he was causing his wife. Ivan Il'ich felt indeed that this escaped her involuntarily, but it was none the easier to bear for all that.

In the Courts, too, Ivan Il'ich observed, or thought he observed, the same strange sort of attitude taken up towards him. At one time it would seem to him as if they regarded him as a man whose place would soon be vacant; then all at once his friends would begin to joke with him about his faddiness, just as if that strange and terrible, unheard of thing that was going on within him, never ceasing to suck away at him, and irresistibly dragging him somewhere, was the most pleasant subject in the world for jesting. Schwarz especially irritated him by his sportiveness, vivacity, and *comme il faut* way of looking at things, reminding Ivan Il'ich of what he was himself ten years ago. •

A party of friends would come and sit down with him to a game at cards, in the lightest, merriest of moods, and the cards would be sorted and dealt, and the usual jests would circulate, and suddenly Ivan Il'ich would be sensible of his sucking pain and of that bad taste in the mouth, and it would seem a barbarous thing to him that he could take any pleasure in the game under such circumstances.

They could all see how hard it was for him, and they would say to him: "We can stop if you are tired. You rest a bit."

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

Rest a bit? No, he could not think of resting ; he would play the rubber.

They were all glum and silent, and Ivan Il'ich felt that he had cast this glumness upon them, and could not dissipate it. Then they had supper and separated, and Ivan Il'ich was left all alone with the consciousness that his life was envenomed, and that he was envenoming the lives of others, and that this venom would not lose in intensity, but would go on penetrating his existence more and more.

And with the consciousness of this, and what is more, with acute physical pain and even with terror, he was obliged to lie down on his bed, unable to sleep for great pain the whole night. And in the morning he had to get up, dress himself, go to Court, speak, write, and if he did not go he had to remain for four-and-twenty hours at home, each one of which was a torment. And he had thus to go on living on the brink of destruction, without a single soul to understand and pity him.

V.

And thus a month, two months, passed away. Just before the new year his brother-in-law came to town, and stayed with them. Ivan Il'ich was at Court. Praskov'ya Thedorovna had gone out shopping. On entering his cabinet he found his brother-in-law there, a healthy fellow of sanguine temperament, unpacking his own trunk. He raised his head on hearing the footsteps of Ivan Il'ich, and glanced at him for a moment in silence. This look

More Tales from Tolstol

revealed everything to Ivan Il'ich. His brother-in-law opened his mouth to sigh, and restrained himself. This movement confirmed everything.

"Well, I've altered a bit, eh?"

"Yes . . . there's a change."

And however much Ivan Il'ich might try to bring his brother-in-law to converse on the subject of his appearance, his brother-in-law continued to be reticent. Praskov'ya Thedorovna arrived, and the brother-in-law went to her. Ivan Il'ich locked the door and began to look at himself in the mirror—full-face first of all, and after that sideways. He took up his portrait, in which he was represented with his wife, and compared the portrait with what he saw in the glass. The change was enormous. Then he stripped up his shirt-sleeve to the elbow, regarded it, let down his sleeve again, sat down on the ottoman, and grew blacker than night.

"It must not be, it must not be," he said to himself, sprang up, went to the table, opened some public document, began to read it, but could not go on with it. He opened the door and went into the saloon. The door leading to the drawing-room was closed. He approached it on tip-toe and began to listen.

"No, you exaggerate," Praskov'ya Thedorovna was saying.

"Exaggerate? Why, surely you can see for yourself? He's a dead man, I tell you; look at his eyes! No light in 'em. What's the matter with him?"

"Nobody knows. Nikolaev (this was the friendly

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

doctor) said something or other, but I don't know what to make of it. Leshchetetsky (this was the former doctor) said on the other hand . . ."

Ivan Il'ich went away, went to his own room, lay down, and began to think: "Reins, renal flux." He remembered all that the doctors had told him, how his renal mischief had begun, and how it was spreading now here and now there. And by the force of the imagination he tried to understand this malady, and how to stop it and cure it. Such a very little was wanted, it seemed to him. "No, I will go again to Peter Ivanovich." (This was the friend whose friend the doctor was.) He rang, ordered them to get the carriage ready, and prepared to go.

"Where are you going, Jean?" asked his wife, with a peculiarly melancholy, and unusually kind expression.

This unusually kind expression offended him. He regarded her gloomily.

"I must go to Peter Ivanovich."

He went to this friend whose friend the doctor was, and with him he went to the doctor. He found him in and had a long talk with him.

After considering all the anatomical and physiological details which, according to the opinion of the doctor, accounted for what was going on inside him, he understood everything.

There was a patch—a tiny little patch in the lower gut. All that could be put to rights. The energy of one organ could be strengthened by diminishing the activity of another organ; healthy processes could be set going, and all would be made right. He was

More Tales from Tolstol

a little late for dinner. He had a little dinner, talked gaily, but for a long time could not settle down to any occupation. At last he went to his cabinet and immediately set to work. He read cases and worked away, but the consciousness that there was gnawing away at him a postponed, serious, suppressed something with which he would finally have to do, never once left him. When he had finished his work he recollected that this suppressed thing was the thought of the lower gut. But he did not give way to it, he went to the drawing-room for some tea. Guests were there, and there was conversation, and music, and singing, and the judge whom they wished to be his daughter's *fiancé* was present. Ivan Il'ich spent the evening, Praskov'ya Fedorovna observed, more gaily than the others, but not for a moment did he forget the weighty, postponed thought of the lower gut. At eleven o'clock he took leave of his guests, and went to his own room. Ever since the beginning of his illness he had slept alone in a little apartment off his cabinet. There he went, undressed, and took up a romance of Zola's, but instead of reading it fell a-thinking. And in his imagination the much-desired improvement of the small gut was accomplished. There was re-absorption, suppuration, and the proper functional activity was restored "That's the whole thing," he said to himself; "all you've got to do is to assist nature." He remembered that he had to take his medicine, got up, took it, lay down on his back, waiting for the beneficial action of the medicine to destroy the pain. "All

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

one has to do is to take things calmly and avoid prejudicial influences, and now, indeed, I really feel better, very much better." He began to feel his side, and the contact was not painful. "Yes, I do not feel it; really I *am* very much better already." He put out the light and lay down on his side. The small gut evidently was righting, readjusting itself. Suddenly he felt the familiar, old, dragging pain, the same obstinate, steady, serious pain. And in his mouth there was the same familiar foulness. His heart began to throb and his head to grow dull. "My God! my God!" he exclaimed, "again, again, and it never ceases." And suddenly the thing struck him from a new point of view. "Lower gut! inflammation indeed!" he said to himself. "It is no question of the intestines, it is no question of inflammation—it is a question of life and death. Yes, it used to be life, and now it is drifting away, drifting away, and I can't stop it. Yes. Why deceive myself? Is it not quite plain to everyone but myself that I am dying, and it is only a question of weeks, of days—it may happen any moment? It was light, and now it is darkness. Then I was there, and now I am here. Where?" A cold shiver came over him—he stopped breathing. He heard only the beating of his heart.

"I shall be no more, what does it mean? There will be nothing at all. For where, indeed, shall I be when I shall be no more? Can it be death? No, I will *not* die." He sprang up and would have lit the candle, fumbled about with tremulous hands, upset the candle and candlestick on to the floor, and

More Tales from Tolstoi

again fell back on his pillow. "Why bother? It is all one," he said to himself, gazing into the darkness with open eyes. "Death? Yes, death, and they know nothing about it, and don't want to know, and have no pity. They are playing." (He heard far away, beyond the door, the sound of voices and music.) "It is all one to them, and yet they must die too. The fools! 'Twill be a little sooner for me and a little later for them, that's all; it will be all the same in the end. And they are happy. Brutes!" He was suffocated with rage. And he was in torments and unendurably wretched. "Can it be that everyone is doomed to experience this dreadful anguish?" He got up.

"I ought not to go on like this, I ought to be calm and think over everything from the beginning." And so he began to reflect. "Yes, the disease began like that. I bumped my side, and it remained much about the same as before both that day and the day after. Then I had a dull sort of pain, and then it got a little worse, then I had the doctor, and then came low spirits and anguish, and then the doctor again, and all the time I was drawing nearer and nearer to the abyss. My strength begins to fail. Nearer and nearer. And now I dwindle to nothing, and there is no light in my eyes. It is death, and here am I, only thinking of my bowels! I am thinking how to set my bowels in order, and it is death that is knocking at my door. Can it really be death?"

And again terror seized him; he panted for breath, bent over and began to search for the candle,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

and knocked the little pedestal-table beside him with his elbow. It stood in his way and hurt him; he flew into a passion with it, pressed upon it still harder in his anger, and overturned the pedestal-table. And in despair, and gasping for breath, he rolled back upon his back awaiting death immediately.

The guests were departing at that very time. Praskov'ya Theodorovna was showing them out. She heard the fall and went in.

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing. I have let something fall unexpectedly."

She went out and brought a light. There he lay, breathing rapidly and heavily, like a man who had run a mile, looking at her with glazing eyes.

"What is the matter, Jean?"

"No—no—nothing. It dropped.—What can I say? She will not understand," he thought to himself.

And, indeed, she did not understand. She got up, lit his candle, and went out hastily. She had to take leave of a guest. When she came back he was lying on his back gazing at the ceiling.

"How are you?—worse, eh?"

"Yes."

She shook her head and sat down.

"I tell you what, Jean, hadn't we better send and see if Leshchetetsky is at home?"

That meant telling the famous doctor to call, and not sparing their money. He smiled bitterly and said no. After sitting a little longer she approached him and kissed him on the forehead.

More Tales from Tolstol

At that moment he hated her with all the strength of his soul, and with difficulty refrained from repulsing her.

"Good-bye. God grant you may get a little sleep."

"Yes."

VI

Ivan Il'ich saw that he was dying, and despaired continually.

In the depth of his soul he knew that he was dying, but not only did he not become accustomed to it, but he simply could not understand it—could not understand it at all.

That syllogism which he had learnt in Kizevcter's logic : "Caius is a man, all men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal," had seemed to him, all his life long, to apply only to Caius, and to have no reference to himself. Caius was a man, man in general, and it was quite correct as applied to Caius ; but *he* was not Caius, he was not man in general ; HE had always been quite, *quite* distinct from all other creatures. Yes, he was, Jack with his own mamma and papa, and with Mita and Volodā and his playthings and his coachman and his nurse, and afterwards with his Kitty, and with all the joys, sorrows, and triumphs of childhood, boyhood, and youth. What had Caius to do with the smell of that striped leather ball that he, Jack, loved so much? Did Caius ever kiss the hand of a mother as he had done? Did Caius ever hear the crinkling of the folds of his mother's silk dress? Did Caius ever smuggle in tarts during a

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

lesson in jurisprudence? Was Caius ever in love? Could Caius ever have presided in Court?

And Caius was certainly mortal, and must die in the regular course of things; but as for me, Vanya, Ivan Il'ich, with all my feelings and sentiments—that's quite a different thing. It cannot possibly be that I must die, that would be too terrible.

Thus did he think within himself.

"If I had to die like Caius, then I should have known it, then an inner voice must needs have told me so; but there was nothing of the sort within me, and I and all my friends quite understood that we were quite different from Caius. And now look here!" he said to himself. "It cannot be, it cannot be, and yet it is. What's the meaning of it? How shall I understand it?"

And he could not understand it, and tried to drive the thought away from him as a false, abnormal, morbid thought, and to substitute for it other normal, healthy thoughts. But this thought, and it was not a mere thought, but as if a reality, came to him again and remained constantly before him.

And he summoned one after the other to take the place of this thought other thoughts, hoping to find support in them. He tried to return to his former habit of thought which had formerly obscured from him the thought of death; but, strange to say, all that had formerly obscured, concealed, annihilated the thought of death, was unable now to produce that effect. Of late Ivan Il'ich had spent a considerable time in these attempts to revive those habits of thought which had obscured the thought of death. "At one

More Tales from Tolstoi

time," he said, "I will get absorbed in my official business, I really live for that." And he had gone to Court driving away from him all doubts ; he had entered into conversation with his colleagues, and would sit in his old way, distraught, skimming over the crowd with a dreamy look, and with both his hands, growing meagre now, resting on the arm of his oak chair, and, as usual, he would bend over to the colleague who was opening the case and whisper a few words to him, and then, suddenly looking up and sitting straight in his chair, would pronounce certain words and begin the business. But suddenly, in the midst of it all, the pain in the side, paying no heed to the development of the case, would begin *its* sucking action. Ivan Il'ich, becoming aware of it, would drive the thought of it away from him, but *it* went on with its business, and *it* came forward and stood right in front of him, and looked at him, and he was turned to stone, the fire of his eye was extinguished, and he began again to ask himself: I wonder whether *it* alone is right? And his colleagues and his subordinates noticed with astonishment and indignation how he, the brilliant, subtle judge, was getting confused and making blunders. Then he would grow alarmed and try and fix his attention, and try, somehow or other, to hold out till the end of the session, and would return home with the bitter consciousness that his business in Court could no longer hide from him what he wanted to be hidden, that his business in Court could not deliver him from *it*. And worse than all else was this: *it* drew him towards it, not in order that he

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

might do something, but simply that he might look at it, straight into its eyes, look at it, and helplessly inert, be inexpressibly tormented.

And escaping from this condition of mind, Ivan Il'ich would seek relief by interposing other screens between him and it, and these other screens would present themselves and for a time seem to deliver him, but immediately they would not so much be destroyed as become transparent, as if it was shining through everything, and nothing whatever could guard against it.

Once during these latter days he went into the drawing-room arranged by him, that very drawing-room where he had had the fall, for the sake of which—oh, the bitterly ridiculous thought of it!—for the sake of arranging which he had sacrificed his life, for he knew that his malady began with the contusion he had received there; well, he entered the room and perceived that there was a dent in the japanned table, cut deep in by something or other. He sought for the cause of it, and found it in the bronze ornamentation of the album which had been bent back at the corner. He took the album, a dear one, which he himself had introduced there *con amore*, and was very angry at the carelessness of his daughter and her friends; this thing torn too, these visiting cards all scattered about. He very carefully put everything in order again, and bent back the ornamentation of the album into its proper place.

On another occasion the idea occurred to him to move all this arrangement with the albums over

More Tales from Tolstoi

into another corner where the flowers were. He called the lackey; either his daughter or his wife came to his assistance. They did not agree with him, they contradicted him; he wrangled, got angry, but it all did him good, because he had forgotten all about *it*, *it* was not visible.

But then his wife said, 'just when he was moving the things about with his own hands: "Allow me, let the servants do it, you will only do yourself harm again," and immediately *it* flashed through the screen, he saw *it*. It flashed through, and yet he made believe that it was hidden, but involuntarily he became attentive to his side again—there sat all the same old thing with the same dull old pain, and he could forget no longer, and *it* was plainly looking at him from behind the flowers. What was the good of it all?

"Yes, no doubt of it, on this curtain, just as much as if I had been storming a breach, did I lose my life. Can it be possible? How horrible and how stupid! It cannot be! It cannot be, yet it is."

He went into his cabinet, lay down, and once more was alone with it. Eye to eye with *it*, and to come to terms with *it*—impossible. He could only look at *it* and grow cold.

VII.

How it happened in the third month of the illness of Ivan Il'ich it is impossible to say, because it happened insensibly, step by step, but at any rate this thing did happen: his wife, his daughter, his

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

son, his servants, his acquaintances, the doctor, and especially he himself, knew that the sole interest felt in him by others was as to how soon he would finally vacate his place, release the living from the impediment of his existence, and deliver himself from his sufferings.

He got less and less sleep; they gave him opium and began to inject morphia. But this did not relieve him. The dull anguish which he experienced in his semi-conscious condition at first was a simple relief from its very novelty, but subsequently it became just as tormenting, and even more tormenting than open pain.

They prepared for him special dishes by the doctor's directions, but all these dishes struck him as being more and more tasteless, more and more nauseating.

In order to assist his evacuations, special apparatuses were arranged, and every time they were applied it was a torture to him. And this torture was increased by the consciousness that another man had to take part in it.

Yet this very unpleasant business itself brought some relief to Ivan Il'ich. The person who always had to do these things for him was the man-servant, Gerasim.

Gerasim was a clean, fresh, young muzhik, always bright and merry. At first the sight of this ever cleanly young fellow, dressed in the Russian fashion, performing this disgusting office, deeply distressed Ivan Il'ich.

Once when he had risen from the night-stool

More Tales from Tolstoi

without strength enough to draw up his pantaloons, he had sunk into a soft chair, and gazed with horror upon his exposed impotent calves, with their sharply defined muscles.

At that moment Gerasim entered in thick boots, distributing around him a pleasant smell of tar from his boots and of fresh winter air, walking with a light, strong step in a clean linen blouse and a clean cotton shirt, with his sleeves turned up over his naked, strong young arms, and not looking at Ivan Il'ich, and visibly restraining, so as not to offend the invalid, his sensation of the joy of life which was beaming in his face, went towards the close-stool.

"Gerasim!" said Ivan Il'ich feebly.

Gerasim trembled, evidently fearing lest he might have committed some blunder or other, and with a quick movement turned towards the invalid his fresh, good, simple young face, on which a beard was just beginning to sprout.

"What do you want, sir?"

"I am afraid this is an unpleasant job for you. Forgive me, I cannot help it."

"Lord, help us!" cried Gerasim with sparkling eyes, and showing his young, white teeth as he smiled; "why shouldn't I do this little job? You are so bad, sir."

And with his strong, skilful arms he performed his usual office, and went out with a light step. And in five minutes he came back again, stepping just as lightly as before.

Ivan Il'ich was still sitting in the chair.

"Gerasim," said he, when the latter had replaced

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

the clean, well-washed close-stool, "come hither if you please, and help me."

Gerasim came.

"Lift me up. It is hard for me alone, and I have sent Dmitry away."

Gerasim came. With his strong arms, just as lightly as he had walked, he embraced Ivan Il'ich skilfully, lifted him up softly, and, holding him up, with the other hand he readjusted his pantaloons, and would have set him down again. But Ivan Il'ich begged him to carry him to the divan. Gerasim without an effort, and as if he scarce held him, led him, almost carrying him to the divan, and sat him down upon it.

"Thanks, how well and cleverly you do everything."

Gerasim smiled again and would have gone away, but Ivan Il'ich liked to be with him so much that he did not want to dismiss him.

"Push that chair yonder close up to me, if you please. No, that one there—under my legs. I feel easier when my legs are raised."

Gerasim brought the chair, placed it in position without knocking it against anything, and placed Ivan Il'ich's feet upon it. It seemed to Ivan Il'ich that he felt much easier ever since Gerasim had raised his feet higher.

"I feel easier when my feet are higher," said Ivan Il'ich. "Place that cushion there under me."

Gerasim did so. Again he raised Ivan Il'ich's feet and placed the cushion. Again Ivan Il'ich felt better so long as Gerasim held up his feet.

More Tales from Tolstoi

As soon as he let them go he felt worse.

"Gerasim," he said to him, "have you got employment now?"

"No, none at all," said Gerasim, who had been learning from the townspeople how to speak with gentlemen.

"What else have you got to do besides this?"

"What have I got to do? I have done everything now, I have only got to chop wood for to-morrow."

"Then go on holding my feet up a little higher—can you?"

"Why of course." Gerasim raised the feet higher. And it seemed to Ivan Il'ich as if in this position he didn't feel the pain at all.

"And how about that wood, eh?"

"Pray do not be uneasy about it, we'll manage."

Ivan Il'ich ordered Gerasim to sit down and hold his feet, and he talked to him. And it was a strange thing, but it seemed to him that he was better so long as Gerasim held his feet.

From henceforth Ivan Il'ich used sometimes to call Gerasim, and get him to hold his feet on his shoulders, and loved to talk with him. Gerasim did this easily, willingly, simply, and so good-naturedly that Ivan Il'ich was touched by it. Health, strength, fulness of life in all other people offended Ivan Il'ich, but strength and fulness of life in Gerasim did not fret but soothed Ivan Il'ich.

The chief torment of Ivan Il'ich was falsehood, the falsehood adopted in some way or other by them all, that he was only ill and not dying, and that all he had to do was to keep quiet and get well, and

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

then it would be all right. He knew very well that whatever they might do, nothing would come of it but still greater torments and death. And this lie tormented him; it tormented him that they would not recognise what they knew and what he knew to be a fact, but would lie to him about his terrible position, and wanted him to, and made him, participate in this lie.

Lies, lies, all these lies lied about him up to the very eve of his death; lies which were bound to degrade this terrible, solemn act of his death down to the level of all their visits, curtains, caviare for dinner—this was a terrible torment for Ivan Il'ich. And it was a strange thing that many a time, when they were fooling him like this, he was within a hair's-breadth of shrieking at them: "Enough of this falsehood. You know, and I know, that I am dying, so at any rate cease to lie about it." But he never had the heart to do this. The frightful, terrible act of his dying—he could see it plainly—was degraded by all who surrounded him to the level of a temporary unpleasantness, an indecency (of the same sort as how to avoid a man who on entering a drawing-room disseminates a bad odour), being so degraded by that same sense of "decency" to which he himself had been a slave all his life, he perceived that none pitied him because none even wanted to understand his condition. Only Gerasim understood that condition, and was sorry for him. And therefore it was only well with Ivan Il'ich when he was with Gerasim.

It was well with him when Gerasim, sometimes

More Tales from Tolstoi

whole nights at a stretch, held up his feet, and would not go to sleep, saying: "Pray do not put yourself about, Ivan Il'ich, sleep a little more;" or, when suddenly addressing him with the familiar thou, added: "As if thou wert not ill, and why should not I render thee this little service?"

Gerasim alone told no lies, everything showed that he alone knew how the matter stood, and did not consider it necessary to conceal it, and was simply sorry for his weak, expiring master. On one occasion, when Ivan Il'ich was for sending him away, he spoke right out: "We must all die, why shouldn't I take a little trouble?" said he, thereby expressing that he made light of his labour, principally because he was doing it for the sake of a dying man, and hoped that for him also someone would do the same sort of work when *his* time came.

Besides this sort of lying, or in consequence of it, the most tormenting thing of all for Ivan Il'ich was the fact that nobody pitied him as he wanted to be pitied; at certain times, after long suffering, the wish would come to Ivan Il'ich, though he would not willingly have admitted it, that someone might pity him just as if he were a sick child, and it was the thing he wished for most of all. He wished that they would caress him and kiss him and weep over him a little, just as people caress and soothe children. He knew that he was an important functionary, that he had a grizzling beard, and therefore that it was impossible, and yet he wished it all the same. In his relations with Gerasim there was something akin to this. And therefore his relations with

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

Gerasim soothed him. Ivan Il'ich wanted to weep, and he wanted others to caress him and weep over him; and then his colleague, the functionary Shebek, comes to see him, and instead of weeping and allowing himself to be caressed, Ivan Il'ich puts on a serious, severe, profound expression of face, and, as far as his inertia will allow him, delivers his opinion on the significance of the judgments of the Court of Appeal, and obstinately clings to the subject. This lie, all around him, and within himself, envenomed more than anything else the last days of the life of Ivan Il'ich.

VIII.

It was morning. It was only morning because Gerasim went away, and Peter the lackey appeared, extinguished the candles, opened one of the curtains, and began very quietly to tidy up the room. Whether it was morning or evening, or Friday or Sunday—it didn't matter which—it was all one and the same thing: the dull, dragging, torturing pain, never for an instant still, the hopeless consciousness of a life that was constantly ebbing, but had not yet quite ebbed away; the consciousness of death, the hateful and terrible, ever-advancing death, the one reality, and yet all this lying going on at the same time. How could there be any talk here of days or weeks, or the days of the week?

"Did you order tea, sir?"

It is a necessary rule that the gentry should drink tea in the morning, he thought to himself, but he only said no.

More Tales from Tolstol

"Would you like to be moved on to the divan, sir?"

He has to put the bedroom in order, and I am in the way, and I am dirt and disorder, he thought to himself, but all he said was: "No, leave me."

The lackey still kept bustling about. Ivan Il'ich stretched out his hand. Peter approached obsequiously. "Do you want anything, sir?"

"My watch."

Peter got the watch, lying under his very arm, and gave it to him.

"Half-past nine. Are they up?"

"No, sir. Vladimir Ivanovich (that was his son) has gone to the gymnasium, but Praskov'ya Thedorovna commanded that they should be awakened if you asked for anything. Did you want them, sir?"

"No, it is not necessary." Shall I try a little tea? he thought. "Yes, bring me some tea."

Peter went towards the door. It was a terrible thing to Ivan Il'ich to be left alone. How should he keep the servant a little longer? Yes, there was his medicine.

"Peter, give me my medicine."

The medicine might do him good after all, there was no knowing. He took the spoon and drank it. No, it was no good. It's all nonsense, deception, he decided, as soon as ever he had tasted the familiar, nasty, and hopeless stuff. No, I can believe in it no longer. But this pain, this pain, why should I have it? If only it would stop for an instant. And he groaned. Peter turned round.

"No, go, bring the tea."

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

Peter departed. Ivan Il'ich, left alone, groaned, not so much from pain, horrible as it was, as from weariness. It was always the same thing over again, all these endless days and nights. If only it would be quicker. Quicker? What did he mean? Death, darkness. No, no. Anything was better than death.

When Peter came in with the tea on a tray, Ivan Il'ich looked at him absently for a long time, not comprehending who he was or what he was. Peter grew confused at this steadfast gaze, and when Peter was confused Ivan Il'ich came to himself again.

"Ah!" said he, "the tea. Very well, put it down, only help me to wash and put on a clean shirt."

And Ivan Il'ich began to wash. Breathing heavily, he washed his hands, his face, cleaned his teeth, began to comb his hair and to look at himself in the mirror. It was a terrible thing to him, a peculiarly terrible thing, to note how closely his hair clung to his pale forehead.

When he came to change his shirt, he knew that it would be still more dreadful for him if he looked at his body, so he did not look at it. But it was finished at last. He put on a dressing-gown, wrapped a plaid round him, and sat down in his chair to tea. For a moment he felt himself refreshed, but no sooner had he begun to drink the tea than that taste, that pain, came back again. With an effort he finished the tea and lay down, stretching out his legs. He lay down and dismissed Peter.

It was the same thing over again. At one moment a gleam of hope, the next moment a raging sea of despair, and all was pain, pain, misery, misery, and

More Tales from Tolstoi

the same thing over and over again. All this lonely misery was terrible ; he would have liked to send for someone or other, but he knew beforehand that it was still worse when other people were with him. "If only I might have some more morphine, I might forget about it. I shall tell the doctor that he must invent something else. To go on like this is impossible, quite impossible."

An hour or two passed in this way. But now there came a ring at the vestibule. The doctor perhaps? Yes, it was the doctor—fresh, brisk, plump, merry, with that sort of expression which says: Ah! ha! we are a little bit nervous, eh? but we'll very soon put all that to rights. The doctor knows that this expression is quite out of place here, but he has put it on once for all and cannot lay it aside again, like a man who has put on a frock-coat in the morning to go visiting.

The doctor came in rubbing his hands in a brisk, encouraging fashion.

"I'm cold, there's a healthy frost to-day ; let me warm myself a bit," he exclaimed, as much as to say you must wait a little bit till I have warmed myself, and when once I have warmed myself I'll very soon put things to rights.

"Well now, how are we?"

Ivan Il'ich felt that what the doctor really wanted to say was: How is our little affair going on? but that feeling it was impossible to say this he said instead: How are we getting on? by which he meant to say: What sort of a night have you had?

Ivan Il'ich looked at the doctor with an expression

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

of face which really asked him: "Will you never be ashamed of telling lies, I wonder?" but the doctor would not notice the inquiry.

Then Ivan Il'ich said: "Just as badly as ever; the pain won't go away, and never ceases. If only you could give me something."

"That's always the way with you invalids. I'm now pretty well warmed, I think. Even Praskov'ya Thedorovna, who is always so careful, could make no objection to my temperature now. Well now, let's see, how are you?" And the doctor pressed his hand.

And now, forsaking his former sprightliness, the doctor, with a serious face, began to examine the patient, feel his pulse, take his temperature, tap him, and put his ear to him.

Ivan Il'ich was firmly and indubitably persuaded that all this was nonsense and pure deceit, but when the doctor, going down on his knees, bent over him and glued his ear to him, now higher up and now lower down, and, with a most important countenance, made various gymnastic evolutions over him, Ivan Il'ich submitted to it as he had submitted to the speeches of advocates in court, knowing very well all the time that they were lying all the time, and why they were lying.

The doctor was still on his knees at the divan, and still poking away at Ivan Il'ich, when the silk dress of Praskov'ya Thedorovna rustled in the doorway, and they could hear her reproaching Peter for not telling her that the doctor had arrived.

She came in, kissed her husband, and immediately

More Tales from Tolstol

began to prove that she had been up long ago, and that it was only owing to a misunderstanding that she had not been there when the doctor arrived

Ivan Il'ich looked at her, and took her all in, and her whiteness and her puffiness, and the cleanness of her hands and neck, and the glitter of her hair, and the brightness of her eyes full of life, were all so many causes of reproach against her. He hated her with all the force of his soul, and her mere contact made him suffer from an access of hatred against her.

Her attitude towards him and his illness was precisely the same. Just as the doctor had taken up an attitude towards the sick man which he could not now drop, so, too, she had taken up an attitude towards him, founded on the assumption that he would not do anything he ought to do, and it was all his own fault, and she loved to blame him for it, and this attitude once taken up she could not drop it.

"He wouldn't listen, you know; he wouldn't take things in time, and, above all, he lies in a position which is very bad for him, with his legs up."

And she told the doctor how he had made Gerasim hold his feet up.

The doctor smiled with bland contemptuousness.

"What are we to do?" said he; "these invalids, you know, sometimes do have such odd ideas, but we may forgive him, I suppose."

When the examination was completed, the doctor looked at his watch, and then Praskov'ya Thedorovna told Ivan Il'ich that she had done what he wanted, and invited the famous doctor to come and see him,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

and they, together with Mikhail Danilovich (that was the name of the general practitioner), were to examine him and form an opinion.

"You surely will not object, I am doing this on my own account," she said ironically, giving him to understand that hitherto she had done everything as he wanted it, and that only in this instance she would not allow him to refuse her. He was silent and frowned. He felt that this lie enveloping him was so complicated that it would be very difficult to put anything right.

And, indeed, at half-past twelve the famous doctor arrived. Again there were auscultations and grave consultations in his apartment and in another apartment, and a lot of talk about the kidneys and the intestines, and questions and answers with such important looks that, once more, instead of the real question of life and death, which was now alone impending over him, a new question emerged about the kidneys and the intestines, which, somehow or other, were not acting as they ought to do, and upon which organs, in consequence, Mikhail Danilovich and the medical celebrity fell at once, and made up their minds to put them to rights.

The celebrated doctor took his leave with a serious but not a hopeless expression of countenance, and, in reply to the audacious question which Ivan Il'ich put to him, at the same time fixing him with eyes sparkling with terror and hope, namely, whether there was any possibility of a cure, the celebrated doctor replied that he couldn't guarantee it, but that it was possible. The look of hope with

More Tales from Tolstol

which Ivan Il'ich followed the doctor out was so piteous that, on perceiving it, Praskov'ya Thedorovna burst into tears as she passed through the door of the cabinet to give the celebrated doctor his honorarium.

The good spirits, caused by the encouragement of the doctor, did not last long. There was the same room, there were the same pictures, the same curtains, furniture, vases, and that self-same sick and suffering body of his. And Ivan Il'ich began to groan; they gave him an injection and he forgot everything. When he came to himself again it was beginning to be dusk, and they brought him his dinner. With an effort he ate a little of the soup; it was all the same over again, and then came nightfall as usual.

After dinner at seven o'clock, Praskov'ya Thedorovna came into his room, in evening dress, with her stout, protuberant bosom, and traces of powder on her face. That very morning she had reminded him that they were going to the theatre. It was Sarah Bernhardt's benefit, and they had a box which he had insisted upon their taking. Now he had forgotten all about this, and her get-up offended him. But he concealed his vexation when he remembered that he himself had insisted that they should hire the box and go, because it would be an intellectual, æsthetic treat for the children.

Praskov'ya Thedorovna came in well satisfied with herself, and yet with a guilty air. She sat down beside him and asked him how he was, simply for the sake of asking, as he could see, and not for the sake of finding out, knowing very well that there

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

was nothing to find out. Then she began to say that she was bound to go, though she would give anything not to go; but the box was taken and Elen was going and his daughter, and Petrishchev (the judicial assessor, his daughter's *fiancé*), and that it was impossible to let them go alone, but that it would have been much more agreeable to her to sit at home with him, only he was to promise to obey the doctor's directions during her absence.

"Yes, and Thedor Dmitrievich (the *fiancé*) would like to come in and see him. Might he come? And Liza?"

"Let them come in if they like."

His daughter came in dressed up, with her bare young body, the same sort of body which was causing him all his suffering, and she showed him her dress. A strong, healthy young girl, visibly in love with herself, and disgusted with disease, suffering, and death, as interfering with her happiness.

Thedor Dmitrievich also came in in a dress coat with his hair curled *à la capoul*, with a long, sinewy neck encircled by a white linen collar, with an enormous white shirt front and narrow black trousers, with a tight-fitting white glove on one hand, and an opera hat.

After him crept in, unobserved, the gymnasiast, also, in his new little uniform, poor little wretch, in gloves, and with frightful blue lines under his eyes, the significance of which Ivan Il'ich knew very well.

He had always felt sorry for his son, and it was terrible to behold his frightened and compassionate

More Tales from Tolstoi

look. Except Gerasim, it seemed to Ivan Il'ich as if Voloda alone understood and pitied him.

They all sat down, again they asked him about his health. Silence ensued. Liza asked her mother about the opera glass. There was a slight dispute between mother and daughter as to what had become of it. The dispute ended unpleasantly.

Theodor Dmitrievich asked Ivan Il'ich whether he had seen Sarah Bernhardt. Ivan Il'ich did not at first understand the question, and presently answered no.

"You have seen her already, I suppose?"

"Yes, in 'Adrienne Lecouvreur.'"

Praskov'ya Theodorovna said that she was particularly good in that part. The daughter contradicted. An argument began about the elegance and realism of her acting, that sort of conversation which is always one and the same thing.

In the middle of the conversation Theodor Dmitrievich looked at Ivan Il'ich and was silent. The others looked at him and were silent. Ivan Il'ich was gazing in front of him with sparkling eyes, evidently he was angry with them. Evidently this ought to be put right, but there was no means whatever of putting it right. This silence ought to be broken somehow. But nobody could make up his mind to do so, and it was frightfully awkward to all of them that no convenient lie was ready to hand, and it was plain to all of them what was wanted. Liza was the first to make up her mind. She broke the silence. She wanted to conceal what all of them were experiencing, but she spoke out.

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

"Well, if we must go, it's high time," she said, looking at her watch, a gift from her father, and smiling at her young man with a scarcely noticeable significant look, which he alone understood, and she stood up rustling her dress.

Then they all stood up, said good-bye, and went away.

When they had gone out, Ivan Il'ich felt a little easier; the lie was no longer there, it had gone out with them, but the pain remained. The same continual pain, the same continual terror had this effect, that nothing was heavier, nothing was lighter, everything was for the worst.

Again, minute after minute, hour after hour, passed by; it was the same thing over and over again, and there was no end to it, and more terrible than all was the inevitable end.

"Yes, send Gerasim here," he replied to a question from Peter.

IX.

Late at night his wife returned; she came in on tip-toe, but he heard her, opened his eyes, and quickly closed them again. She wanted to send away Gerasim and sit with him herself. He opened his eyes and said: "No, go away."

"You are suffering very much, eh?"

"Much the same as usual."

"Take some opium."

He consented, and drank it. She went out.

For about three hours he was in a tormenting

More Tales from Tolstoi

slumber. It seemed to him as if he and the pain were shut up together somehow in a narrow and deep black sack, and were getting deeper and deeper into it and couldn't get out. And this horrible state of affairs was accompanied with great personal suffering. And he was afraid, and wanted to break out somewhere and struggled, and wanted help. And quite suddenly he burst out of the sack and fell somewhere, and awoke. Gerasim was still sitting at his feet on the bed, brooding quietly and patiently. There he was lying with the thin, stockinged feet of his master raised upon his shoulders; the light was still there with the shade upon it, and there, too, was the same unceasing pain.

"Go away, Gerasim," he whispered.

"It doesn't matter, I'll sit a bit longer."

"No, go away."

He removed his feet, lay with his hand on his side, and felt very sorry for himself. He continued to lie like this until Gerasim had gone into the other room, and then he was unable to contain himself, and wept like a child. He wept because of his helplessness, because of his frightful loneliness, because of the cruelty of people, because of the cruelty of God, because of the absence of God.

"Why hast Thou done all this? Why hast Thou brought me hither? Why, oh why, dost Thou torture me so terribly?"

He did not expect an answer, and he wept because there was no answer, and couldn't be an answer. The pain rose up again, but he did not move, he did not call. He said to himself: "Very well, then,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

smite me! But what for? What have I done to Thee? Why dost Thou smite me?"

After that he was silent, he ceased not only to weep, but even to breathe, and became all attention, as if he were listening not to the voice which speaks through the lips, but to the voice of the soul, to the current of thought arising up within him.

"What dost thou require?" was the first clear notion expressible by words which he heard.

"What dost thou require?" he kept repeating to himself. "What? Not to suffer. To live," he answered.

And again he gave himself up entirely to an attentive expectation, so intense that even his pain did not distract him.

"To live? How do you mean to live?" asked the voice of the soul.

"To live as I lived before, well and pleasantly."

• "As you lived before, well and pleasantly?" asked the voice.

And he began to go over in his imagination the best moments of his pleasant life. But, oddly enough, all these best moments of his pleasant life seemed to him to be quite different now to what they had seemed then. It was so with all of them except the recollections of his childhood. There in his childhood there was something really pleasant, with which it was possible to live if only he could go back to it. But there was now no trace of the man who had experienced this pleasantness, it was like a reminiscence of someone else.

No sooner did he begin to consider what was

More Tales from Tolstol

the result of his life, namely, that actually present he, Ivan Il'ich, than everything that had seemed so pleasant thawed away before his very eyes and turned into nothingness, a nothingness that was sometimes odious.

And the further away he got from his childhood, and the nearer he drew to the present time, the more insignificant and doubtful this pleasantness became. This began from the time that he was a law student. Then, indeed, there was still something that was really good; then there was gaiety, then there was friendship, then there were hopes. But in the higher classes these good moments became rarer and rarer. Afterwards, in the time of his first service at the Governor's, there were again some good moments; these were the recollections of his love for his wife. Afterwards all this was mixed up, and there was still less of good in it. Still further on there was still less of good, and the further he went on the less of good he found.

Then came his marriage—and disillusionment so unexpectedly . . . and the sensuality of it and the hypocrisy! And this dead officialism, and this care about money, and then a year of it, and two years of it, and ten, and twenty—and always the same old thing over again! And the further it went on the more it savoured of death. "And I going downhill so nonchalantly, imagining all the time that I was going uphill. And so it was. According to the general opinion I *was* going uphill, and all the time life was just as much vanishing from beneath me. And now I am ready. Let me die!

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

"Why is it all so? Why, indeed? It cannot be! It cannot be that life is so senseless, so hideous? And if it really was so odious and senseless, why die, and die suffering? There is something not right."

Possibly I have not lived as I ought to have lived? flashed through his head. But how can that be when I have always done my duty? And immediately he drove away from him this unique solution of all the riddles of life and death, as if it were something absolutely impossible.

And what do you want now? To live? How? To live as you lived in the Courts when the court-usher announced: "Judgment is going to be delivered!"

"Judgment is coming, judgment is coming," he kept repeating to himself. "Is this the judgment? And I am surely not guilty!" he cried aloud with rage. "What for?" And he ceased to weep, and turning his face to the wall kept thinking continually of one and the same thing: "Wherefore all this horror?"

But think of it as he might, he could find no answer. And when, as it frequently did come, the thought came to him that all this arose from the circumstance that he had not lived as he ought to have lived, he immediately called to mind the regular life he had always led, and drove away that frightful thought.

X.

Another fortnight had passed. Ivan Il'ich was now confined to the divan. He would not lie in

More Tales from Tolstoi

bed, but he lay on the divan. And lying almost the whole time with his face to the wall, he suffered continually in his solitude the same inexplicable sufferings, and kept on thinking the same inexplicable thought: "What is this? Can it be true that this is death?" And the inner voice answered: "Yes, it is true."—"Wherefore these torments?"—It is because, not wherefore. Besides and beyond this there was nothing at all.

From the very beginning of his illness, from the time that Ivan Il'ich first went to the doctor, his life had been divided between two opposite interchanging tendencies—on the one hand despair and the expectation of an unintelligible and terrible death; on the other hand hope and the absorbingly interesting observation of the natural processes of his body; on the one hand was an unintelligible, terrible death, from which there was absolutely no escape; and, on the other hand, there was constantly before his eyes his bowels or his kidneys, which temporarily refused to perform their proper functions.

From the very beginning of his illness these two tendencies were continually superseding each other; but the further the disease advanced the more dubious and fantastic became the physiological ideas, and the more real the consciousness of approaching death.

He had only to remember what he had been three months before and what he was now—he had only to remember how steadily he had been going downhill, in order to destroy every possibility of hope.

During the latter period of the loneliness in which

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

he was, lying with his face turned to the back of the divan, that loneliness in the midst of the populous city, and his numerous acquaintances and their families, a loneliness more complete than any loneliness to be found elsewhere, whether it were to be sought in the bottom of the sea or in the earth—in the latter period of this frightful loneliness Ivan Il'ich lived in imagination entirely in the past. One after another the pictures of his past life presented themselves before him. It always began with what was nearest in time and went on to what was most distant—to his childhood, and there stopped. When Ivan Il'ich thought of the preserved plums which they were giving him to eat now, he called to mind a moist, wrinkled plum in his childhood, of its peculiar taste, and of how his mouth watered when he got down to the kernel, and along with this recollection of the taste of the plum there arose a whole series of other recollections of the same period—his nurse, his brother, his playthings. "But I mustn't think of that, it is too painful," said Ivan Il'ich to himself, and again he transferred his thoughts to the present time. The buttons on the back of the divan, and the wrinkles of the morocco reminded him of something else. "Morocco is dear, it won't last," his wife had said, "and there had been a quarrel about that. But the morocco was another morocco, and there was another quarrel "when we tore papa's portfolio, and they punished us, and mamma brought us cakes." And again he lingered over his childhood, and again it was painful to Ivan Il'ich, and he tried to drive it away and to think of something else.

More Tales from Tolstol

And now again, together with this series of recollections, another series of recollections began to pass through his mind as to how his disease had grown and increased. It was the same thing; the further back he went the more of life there was. There was also more of good in life, and life itself was fuller. And both these recollections blended together. As the torments kept on growing worse and worse, so also all life grew worse and worse, he thought to himself. There was a bright point far back in the beginning of life, and after that everything was blacker and blacker and quicker and quicker. "The pace is in inverse proportion to the distance from death," thought Ivan Il'ich to himself. And this image of a stone flying downwards with ever-increasing velocity fastened upon his mind. Life, a series of ever-increasing sufferings, was always flying more and more rapidly towards its end, and that end most frightful suffering. "I am flying. . . ." He trembled, writhed, would have resisted, but he knew already that it was no use resisting; and again, wearied of looking, yet unable not to look at what was before him, he gazed at the back of the divan, and waited and waited for that frightful fall, jolt, and destruction. "It's no good resisting," he said to himself, "yet if only I knew why this is, and that is impossible. It might be explained if I were to say that I have not lived as I ought to have lived, but this I cannot possibly acknowledge," said he to himself as he recollected all the correctness, regularity, and respectability of his life. "It is impossible to allow that," said he to himself, smiling

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

with his lips as if someone could see this smile of his and be deceived by it. "There is no explanation! Torment, death. . . . Wherefore?"

XI.

Thus a fortnight passed away. During this fortnight happened an event which Ivan Il'ich and his wife had long wished for. Petrishchev made a formal proposal for the hand of his daughter. This happened in the evening. Next day Praskov'ya Theodorovna went to her husband, meaning to tell him about the offer of Theodor Petrishchev, but that same night a change for the worse had taken place in the condition of Ivan Il'ich. Praskov'ya Theodorovna found him on the same sofa, but in a new position. He was lying on his back groaning, and gazing in front of him with a fixed, vacant look.

She began to speak about his medicine. He turned his look upon her. She did not finish what she had begun to say, such anger, especially against herself, was expressed in that look.

"For Christ's sake let me die in peace," he said.

She would have gone away, but at that moment her daughter also came in and asked him how he was. He looked at his daughter as he had looked at his wife, and in answer to her question about his health drily said to her that he would very soon relieve them all of his existence. They were both silent, sat down for a little, and then went away.

"How are we to blame?" said Liza to her mother.

More Tales from Tolstol

"We haven't done anything. I am sorry for papa, but why should he torment us?"

The doctor came at the usual time. Ivan Il'ich answered him "Yes" and "No," never once ceasing to regard him angrily, and at the end of the interview he said:

"You know very well* that nothing can help, so leave it."

"We can relieve the suffering," said the doctor.

"Even that you can't do; leave it."

The doctor went into the drawing-room and told Praskov'ya Thedorovna that things were going very badly, and that there was only one thing—opium—which could relieve his sufferings, which must be terrible.

The doctor said that his physical sufferings were terrible, and that was true; but still more terrible than his physical sufferings were his moral sufferings, and in this was his chief torment.

His moral sufferings were due to this circumstance: that night, looking at the sleepy, good-natured face of Gerasim, with its high cheek-bones, it suddenly came into his head: "What if, in very deed, the whole of my life, my conscious life, was not what it ought to be?"

It came into his head that what had seemed to him before an utter impossibility, namely, that he had lived his life not as he ought to have lived it, that this might really be true. It came into his head that those scarcely-noticed inclinations of his to fight against that which the most highly placed people regarded as a sovereign good, that those scarcely

The Death of Ivan Iliich

noticed inclinations, which he had instantly driven away from him, might after all have been the real things he should have lived for, and that everything else might not have been so. And his official duties, and his theory of life, and his family, and his social and official interests—all this might not have been the real thing; he tried to defend it all to himself. And suddenly he felt all the weakness of what he was defending. And there was no use defending it.

"And if it is so," he said to himself, "and I am departing from life with the consciousness that I have ruined everything that was given to me, and it is impossible to put it right again, what then?"

He lay on his back, and began to go over his whole life anew.

When, in the morning, he saw the lackey and then his wife, and then his daughter, and then the doctor, all their movements, all their words, confirmed to him the terrible truth which had been revealed to him in the night. He saw in them himself and all that for which he had lived, and he saw plainly that it was all not the real thing—it was all a frightful, immense deception, obscuring both life and death. The consciousness of this increased his physical sufferings tenfold. He groaned and flung himself about, and tore off his clothes; they seemed to stifle and oppress him, and therefore he hated them.

They gave him a large dose of opium, he lost consciousness, but at dinner-time the whole thing began over again. He drove them all away from him, and tossed from side to side.

His wife came to him and said: "Jean, my darling,

More Tales from Tolstol

do this for me, for *me*. It can do no harm, and is often of use. Come, it is really nothing. People in health often do it."

He opened his eyes widely.

"What, to communicate, eh? Why? It is not necessary. And besides——"

She burst out weeping.

"Yes, my friend, I will call our priest, he is so kind."

"Excellent, very well," said he.

When the priest came and confessed him he was touched, felt a sort of relief from his doubts, and consequently from his sufferings, and for a moment hope came back to him. Again he began to think about his lower intestine and the possibility of curing it. He communicated with tears in his eyes.

When they laid him down after communion he felt easier for a moment, and again a hope of life appeared. He began to think of the operation which lay before him. "I want to live, to live," he said to himself.

His wife came to ask him how he was. She said the usual words, and added:

"Now, don't you feel better?"

Without looking at her he answered: "Yes."

Her dress, her attitude, the expression of her face, the sound of her voice—it all said to him this one thing: "All that which you have lived for, and would live for, is a lie and a deception, hiding from you life and death." And no sooner had he thought this than a hatred of it all rose up within him, and together with the hatred, physical torment,

The Death of Ivan Il'ich

and with the torment the consciousness of inevitable, imminent ruin.

The expression of his face when he had said "Yes" was terrible. On pronouncing this yes he looked her straight in the face, and with extraordinary quickness, considering his weakness, he turned over on one side and cried: "Go away, go away, leave me."

XII

From that moment commenced the shrieking fit which lasted for three days, and was so terrible that it was impossible to hear it without horror even through two doors. When he had answered his wife he understood that he was lost, that there could be no return to health, that the end had come, quite the end, and although his doubt was now settled, yet doubt it remained.

- "Wo! Wo! Wo!" he cried in various intonations. He had begun with crying: "I won't, I won't," and then continued to cry the syllable "Wo" only.

These three days, during which time did not exist for him, he was struggling in that black sack into which an invisible, irresistible power had dragged him. He fought as a condemned criminal in the hands of the executioner fights, knowing that he cannot save himself, and every moment he felt that, notwithstanding all his struggles and exertion, he was drawing nearer and nearer to that which terrified him so. He felt that his torment consisted in his being dragged into this black hole, and still more in his being unable to creep through it. He was

More Tales from Tolstoi

prevented from creeping through it by the consciousness that his life was good. This justification of his life held him as if with hooks, and would not let him get forward, and tormented him more than anything else.

Sudden'y some sort of force smote him on the breast and in the side, his breathing became still more laboured, he struggled forward in the hole, and there at the end of the hole something or other was shining. He felt now as one feels in a railway carriage when one thinks that one is going forward when one is going backward, and one suddenly recognises the real direction.

"Yes, it was all what it should not have been," he said to himself, "but it doesn't matter. It is possible, quite possible, to do the right thing. But what is the right thing?" he asked himself, and was again silent.

This was at the end of the third day, two hours before his death. At this very time the gymnasiast had quietly crept into his father's room, and approached his bed. The dying man was still shrieking desperately and throwing his hands about. One of his hands fell on the head of the gymnasiast. The little gymnasiast seized it, pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears.

At that same moment Ivan Il'ich came to himself, saw the light, and it was revealed to him that his life had not been what it ought to have been, but that it was still possible to set it right. He asked himself: "What then is the right thing?" and was silent, listening intently. Then he felt that someone was

The Death of Ivan Il'loh

kissing his hand. He opened his eyes and beheld his son. He was sorry for him. His wife approached him. There she was with open mouth, and with undried tears on her nose and cheek, regarding him with an expression of despair. He was sorry for her.

"Yes, I am tormenting them," he thought; "it is wretched for them, but it will be better for them when I die." He wanted to say this, but he had not the strength to pronounce it. "But why speak at all? One must act," he thought to himself. With a look he indicated his son to his wife and said:

"Take away . . . a pity . . . and thou also." He wanted to say besides: "Forgive," but he said: "Never mind," and not being strong enough to rectify the error he waved his hand, knowing that HE understood whom it alone concerned.

And suddenly it became clear to him that that which was tormenting him and would not go away was suddenly going away all at once and altogether. He was sorry for them; and he must cease from paining them. He must deliver them and deliver himself at the same time from these sufferings. "What a good and simple thing it is," he thought. "And the pain," he asked himself, "whither has it gone? Come now, where art thou, oh pain?" He began to listen intently.

"Yes, there it is. Well, pain, thou mayest depart."

"And death, where is it?"

He searched for his former habitual fear of death, and did not find it. "Where is it? What is death?" There was no terror because there was no death.

More Tales from Tolstoi

Instead of death there was light. "Just look now!" he suddenly cried aloud. "What joy!"

So far as he was concerned, all this had taken place in a single instant, and the insignificance of this instant remained unchanged. So far as those present at his death-bed were concerned, his agony lasted another two hours. Something or other was heaving in his breast, his extenuated body was collapsing. Presently the heaving and gasping became less and less frequent.

"It is all over," said somebody over him.

He heard these words and repeated them in his mind. "Death is done with," he said to himself. "There is no more death."

He drew in his breath, uttered a half sigh, stretched himself and expired.

VIII.—THE PENITENT SINNER

“And he said to Jesus: Remember me, Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said unto him: Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”—*Luke xxiii. 42, 43.*

THERE was a man who lived in the world for seventy years, and all that time he lived a life of sin. And this man fell sick, and he did not repent. And when death came, in his last hour, he burst into tears and said: “Lord, forgive me as Thou forgavest the thief on the cross!” Scarce had he succeeded in saying this when his soul departed. And the soul of the sinner loved God and believed in His mercy, and came to the doors of heaven.

And the sinner began to knock and beg to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven.

And he heard a voice behind the door saying: “What man is this that knocketh at the door of Heaven, and what deeds hath he done in his lifetime?”

And the voice of the Accuser answered, and counted up all the sinful deeds of this man. And he named no good deeds at all.

And the voice behind the door answered: “Sinners cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Depart hence!”

And the man said: “My Lord! I hear thy voice,

More Tales from Tolstoi

but thy face I do not see, and thy name I know not."

And the voice answered: "I am Peter the Apostle."

And the sinner said: "Have pity upon me, Peter the Apostle, and be mindful of human weakness and the mercy of God. Wert not thou a disciple of Christ; didst thou not hear His teaching from His very lips and see the example of His life? And remember—when He was afflicted and tormented in spirit, and begged thee three times not to sleep but to pray, thou didst sleep because thine eyes were heavy, and three times He found thee sleeping. And so it hath been with me.

"And remember, too, how thou didst promise Him not to deny Him even unto death, and how thou didst thrice deny Him when they brought Him before Caiaphas. And so it hath been with me.

"And remember, too, how the cock crew, and thou didst depart and weep bitterly. So it hath been with me. Thou can'st not but let me in."

And the voice behind the door of Paradise was silent.

And after no very long delay the sinner again began to knock at the door and ask to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven.

And another voice was heard to speak from behind the door, and it said: "What man is this, and what manner of life did he live in the world?"

And the voice of the Accuser replied, and recounted all the evil deeds of the sinner, and named no good deeds at all.

And the voice behind the door answered: "Depart

The Penitent Sinner

hence ; such sinners cannot live together with us in Heaven."

And the sinner said : " My Lord, I hear thy voice, but thy face I see not, and I do not know thy name."

And the voice said to him : " I am King David the Prophet."

And the sinner did not despair, and did not depart from the door of Heaven, and began to say : " Have pity upon me, King David, and remember human weakness and the mercy of God. God loved thee and exalted thee in the eyes of the people. Everything was thine—dominion and glory and riches and wives and children ; and thou didst behold from thy roof the wife of a poor man, and sin awakened in thee, and thou didst take the wife of Uriah and didst slay Uriah himself with the sword of the Ammonites. Thou, the rich man, didst take from the poor man his last little lamb, and destroyed the man himself. So it hath been with me.

" And remember how, afterwards, thou didst repent and say : ' I acknowledge my faults, and my sins are ever before me.' So it hath been with me. Thou can'st not but let me in."

And the voice behind the door was hushed.

And in a little while the sinner again began to knock at the door and beg to be admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven. And for the third time a voice was heard behind the door saying : " Who is this man, and how hath he lived his life in the world ? "

And the voice of the Accuser answered for the third time, and recounted all the evil deeds of the man, and named no good deeds at all.

More Tales from Tolstoi

And the voice answered from behind the door and said : "Depart hence! Sinners cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

And the sinner answered : "Thy voice I hear, but thy face I see not, and I do not know thy name."

And the voice answered : "I am John the Divine, the disciple whom Jesus loved."

And the sinner rejoiced and said : "Now thou can'st not refuse to let me in. Peter and David might have let me in because they knew the weakness of man and the mercy of God. And thou wilt let me in because thou lovest much. Didst not thou, oh, John the Divine, write in thy book that God is Love, and he that loveth not knoweth not God? Didst thou not in thine old age say this one sentence to the people: 'Brethren, love one another'? How then can'st thou now begin to hate me and drive me away? Either deny what thou thyself hast said, or else let me into the Kingdom of Heaven."

And the gates of Paradise were opened, and John embraced the penitent sinner, and admitted him into the Kingdom of Heaven.

IX.—THREE DEATHS

I.

IT was Autumn. A carriage and a calesche were proceeding at a sharp trot along the high-road. In the carriage sat two women. One of them was the mistress, thin and pale. The other was the maid, smug, florid, and buxom. Her short dry tresses peeped forth from under her faded bonnet, her pretty hand in her torn glove readjusted them from time to time; her swelling bosom, covered by a rug, was full of the breath of health; her quick black eyes glanced at one moment out of the window at the scurrying fields, at another stared boldly at her mistress, or glanced uneasily at the corners of the carriage. Before the very nose of the waiting-maid the bonnet of her mistress, attached to the netting of the carriage, rocked to and fro; on her knees lay a lap-dog, her legs were hunched up, the hand-box standing on the floor of the carriage and the drumming of her feet upon it was just audible amidst the creaking of the carriage-springs and the clattering of the window-glasses.

With her hands on her knees, and closed eyes, the mistress rocked softly on the pillows piled up behind her, and kept on coughing an internal cough,

More Tales from Tolstol

at the same time slightly wrinkling her brows. On her head was a white night-cap, and a blue handkerchief was fastened round her fresh, white neck. The straight parting, continuing beneath the night-cap, divided the reddish, extraordinarily flat, well-preserved hair, and there was something dry and death-like in the whiteness of the skin of this broad parting. The withered, somewhat yellowish skin hung somewhat loosely on the delicate and pretty face, and the cheeks and jaws had a pinkish hue. Her lips were dry and restless, her travelling cloth dress lay in straight folds over her shrunken bosom. Notwithstanding that her eyes were closed, the face of the mistress expressed weariness, irritation, and suffering.

The lackey, perched upon the box-seat, was dozing; the post-driver, shouting vigorously, whipped up his sturdy, sweating team of four, glancing around occasionally at the other post-driver behind him in the calesche, who was bawling out just as lustily. The broad, double traces of the rapidly revolving tyres extended evenly along in the chalky mud of the road. The sky was grey and cold—a cold mist enveloped the plain and the road. It was stuffy in the carriage, which smelt of *eau de cologne* and dust. The sick woman stretched back her head and gradually opened her eyes. Her large eyes were sparkling and of a very pretty dark colour.

"There it is again," she said, irritably shoving aside with her pretty, wasted hand the corner of the crinoline of her maid, which had barely touched her leg, and her mouth pouted peevishly. The maid

grasped her crinoline with both hands, rose for a moment on her sturdy legs, and sat a little further off. Her fresh face had a bright flush upon it. The beautiful dark eyes of the invalid greedily followed every movement of the maid. Presently the mistress rested both arms on the seat of the carriage, and also tried to raise herself in order to sit up a little higher, but her strength failed her. Her mouth pouted, and her whole face wore an expression of impotent, angry scorn.

"Help me, would you! It is really quite unnecessary. I can do it myself, only don't load me with your—what shall I call them—your sacks then—have a little mercy! Better not touch me at all if you can't do better than that!"

The mistress closed her eyes—presently she quickly raised her eyelids again and glanced at her maid. The maid, as she returned her gaze, nibbled at her pretty lower lip. A deep sigh arose from the invalid's breast, but the sigh ended in a cough. She turned aside, puckered her brow, and grasped her bosom with both hands. When the cough ceased she closed her eyes again and continued to sit motionless. The carriage and the calesche entered a village. The maid drew her plump hand from beneath her jacket and crossed herself.

"What is it?" asked her mistress.

A posting-station, my lady."

"Why did you cross yourself? I ask."

"We passed the church, my lady."

The invalid turned to the window, and began slowly to cross herself, looking with all her big eyes at the

More Tales from Tolstol

large village church, round which the invalid's carriage was just then passing.

The carriage and calesche stopped together at the posting-station. Out of the calesche stepped the sick woman's husband and the doctor, who came up to the carriage.

"How are you now?" asked the doctor, taking her hand and feeling her pulse.

"Are you not a little tired, my friend?" inquired her husband in French. "Don't you want to get out?"

The maid, looking after her wraps, squeezed herself into a corner, so as to be as much out of the way of the conversation as possible.

"Pretty much the same as before, but it doesn't matter," replied the invalid. "I won't get out."

The husband, after pausing a short time, went into the post-station. The maid, skipping out of the carriage, tripped lightly on the tips of her toes over the mud into the open door.

"My feeling bad is no reason why you should not have your breakfast," said the invalid, smiling slightly at the doctor, who was standing at the carriage window. "Not one of them mind me," added she, as soon as the doctor had, with noiseless step, quitted her, and darted up the steps of the post-station like a lynx. "They are well—so it is all one to them. Oh, my God!"

"I tell you what, Edward Ivanovich," said the husband, encountering the doctor and pressing his arms with a merry smile, "I have ordered them to bring us a drink. What do you say to that?"

"Oh, that's all right," replied the doctor.

"And what about her?" asked the husband with a sigh, lowering his voice and raising his brows.

"I say that she cannot go as far as Italy—please God she may reach Moscow—especially this weather."

"My God, my God! What's to be done, then?"—and the husband put his hand over his eyes. "Here!" he added, addressing the man who was bringing the drink.

"The idea must be given up," answered the doctor, shrugging his shoulders.

"But tell me what I am to do!" insisted the husband. "You know I have done everything to prevent her. I spoke about my means and about the children, whom we should have to leave behind, and about my affairs—and she would listen to nothing. She makes her plans for living abroad just as if she were quite well. And to tell her of her real condition!—well, you might just as well kill her outright."

"She's as good as dead already, you ought to know that, Vasily Dmitrievich. A person can't live when he has no lungs, and lungs can't grow again. It is melancholy, miserable. But what's to be done? All that you and I can now do is to take care that the rest of the road is as easy as possible. This is now a case for a priest."

"Ah, my God! you understand my position, how can I remind her of her last will! Come what may, I cannot tell her that. You know how good she is. . . ."

"Nevertheless, you ought to try and persuade her

More Tales from Tolstol

to stop till the winter season," said the doctor, shaking his head significantly—"and then the roads might be bad."

"Aksusha! Aksusha!" screamed the daughter of the post-master, throwing a shawl round her head, and dashing down the muddy back staircase; "come and look at Lady Shirkinskaya, they say she's going abroad for breast sickness. I have never seen how consumptives look before."

Aksusha leaped across the threshold, and the pair of them, taking each other by the hand, ran out to the gate. Slackening their steps, they passed close to the carriage and stared into the open window. The invalid turned her head towards them, but, observing their curiosity, frowned and turned away.

"Little mother!" cried the post-master's daughter, quickly turning her head round, "how wonderfully beautiful she used to be, and what is she now! It is frightful. Did you see her—did you see her, Aksusha?"

"And how lean!" chimed in Aksusha. "Come, let us see what is in the bottom of the coach. Look, she has turned away, and I have not seen half. What a pity, Mashad!"

"Yes, and how muddy it is!"—and they both ran back through the gate again.

"I suppose I do look frightful," thought the invalid. "Oh, only let us make haste, make haste and go abroad, and then I shall soon pick up again."

"Well, how are you now, my friend?" said the husband, coming to the carriage, and still chewing a morsel of something.

Three Deaths

"Always the same question!" thought the invalid "Anyhow, it doesn't seem to interfere with his appetite."

"Oh, it's nothing!" she murmured between her teeth.

"I'll tell you what, my friend, I fear you'll be all the worse for the journey, especially in this weather, and Edward Ivanoyich says the same thing. What do you say to turning back home?"

She was too angry to speak.

"The weather may be better presently, we could postpone the journey, and you would then be better—we might all go together."

"Pardon me! If I hadn't listened to you all this time, I might have been in Berlin by now and quite well again."

"What was to be done, my angel, you know it was quite impossible. But if you would only stop at home for a month say, you would get ever so much better, I could complete my business, and we might take the children."

"The children are well, but I am not."

"But, my friend, just think! What with this weather, suppose you grew worse on the road . . . while at home, at any rate . . ."

"Home indeed! Why, I should only die at home," replied the sick woman passionately.

But the word *die* plainly frightened her—she grew silent and looked interrogatively at her husband. He cast down his eyes and was silent. The mouth of the invalid suddenly put on a childish pout and the tears flowed from her eyes. Her husband covered

More Tales from Tolstoi

his face with his pocket-handkerchief, and withdrew from the carriage.

"No, I will go," said the invalid, raising her eyes to heaven, and she folded her arms and began to mutter incoherently: "Why is it so, why is it so? My God, my God!" she said, and the tears flowed still more violently.

She prayed long and fervently, but her bosom remained just as sick and sore; in the sky, in the fields, on the road, everything remained just as grey and dull; and that autumn mist neither denser, nor thinner, lay just as before over the mud of the road and over the roofs of the cottages, and over the carriages and the sheepskins of the post-drivers who, conversing together with strong and merry voices, were oiling the wheels of the vehicles and putting fresh horses to.

II.

The carriage was ready, but the driver still delayed—he had entered the common room of the post-ing-station. It was hot, stuffy, dark, and oppressive in the post-station room, which smelt of people, baked bread, cabbage, and sheepskins. A good many post-drivers were in the living-room, the cook was busy about the stove, and on the stove in sheepskins lay a sick man.

"Uncle Khveder, Uncle Khveder, I say," cried a young fellow, a post-driver in a sheepskin pelisse and with his whip in his belt, entering the room and turning towards the sick man.

"What are you skulking about for, Fed'ka, eh?"

Three Deaths

asked one of the other drivers, "don't you know the carriage is waiting for you?"

"I wanted to ask him for his boots as mine are busted," replied the fellow, throwing back his hair and thrusting his gauntlet gloves into his girdle; "hie, Uncle Khveder, are you asleep?" he repeated, marching up to the stove.

"What is it?" sounded a faint voice, and a thin, red-bearded face peeped over the stove. A broad, bleached, and wasted hand, covered with hair, with an effort drew an *armyak* over a skinny shoulder, hardly hidden by a muddy shirt. "Give me a drink, brother! What's the matter?"

The young fellow brought him a pitcher full of water. "Look now, Teddy," said he, after a pause, "you won't want these new boots of yours any more now, give 'em to me. You won't walk about any more now, will you?"

The sick man bent his weary head over the glazed pitcher and, moistening his sparse pendent moustaches in the dark water, drank feebly and greedily. His touzled beard was not clean, his sunken, turbid eyes raised themselves with difficulty to the young fellow's face. On withdrawing from the water he wanted to raise his arm in order to wipe dry his moist lips but could not, and dried them on the sleeve of his *armyak** instead. In silence, and breathing heavily through his nose, he looked straight into the eyes of the young fellow, rallying all his strength.

"You haven't promised them to anyone else, have you?" said the youth, "it doesn't much matter.

* A blouse of camel's hair.

More Tales from Tolstol

The main thing is, it's mucky out of doors and I've work to do, so I said to myself: 'Just ask Teddy for his boots, he won't want 'em any more, anyhow.' Now, say yourself: what good *are* they to you?"

Something in the sick man's breast overflowed and buzzed, he bent over and gave himself up to a throaty coughing fit which he could not rid himself of.

"Yes, indeed, what good are they to you?" angrily and unexpectedly croaked the cook, her voice filled the room: "you haven't stirred from the stove this month and more, you know you're gone all to pieces; why, your inside is all wrong, didn't you hear it just now? What does he want with new boots, he won't be buried in them, I suppose? And it's high time I think for you to pray the Lord to forgive you your sins. You're gone all to pieces I say. You can't take him from one room to another or anywhere else. I hear there are hospitals in town, but what's the good of that?—every corner is occupied, and he's about done for. There's no room for you, anyhow, and besides, they like to have clean folks."

"Hello, Serega! take your place, the gentlefolks are waiting!" the voice of the post-station starosta shouted in at the door.

Serega would have gone out without waiting for an answer, but he could see by the eyes of the sick man all the time he was coughing that he wanted to say something.

"You may take the boots, Serega!" said he, suppressing the cough and breathing a little more freely, "but listen! buy me a head-stone when I die," he added hoarsely.

Three Deaths

"Thanks, uncle! Then I may take them, eh? And a head-stone, eh? Yes, yes, I'll buy one for you."

"There, you hear what he says, my children?" the sick man was able to bring out, and then he bent down again, stifled by a recurring cough.

"Yes, it's a bargain, we have heard," said one of the drivers.

"Come, Serega, take your seat," said the starosta, looking in again, "Lady Shirkinskaya is ill, you know."

Serega quickly divested himself of his big, worn-out, bulgy boots, and pitched them under a bench. The new boots of Uncle Khveder fitted him at the first try on, and Serega, glancing down at them as he departed, went out to the carriage.

"Those are something like boots; let me give them a polish," said the driver, with the polishing-brush in his hands, as Serega, mounting on to the box, took the reins. "Did you get 'em for nothing?"

"Looks like, doesn't it?" replied Serega, standing up and arranging the folds of his *yarmak* round his legs. "And now, off you go, my beauties!" he cried to the horses, cracking his whip, and the carriage and the calesche with their passengers, trunks, and baggage, vanished in the grey autumn mist, rolling quickly along the wet road.

The sick driver remained in the stuffy room on the stove, and without coughing his cough out, with an effort turned upon the other side and was quiet.

People came in and went out of the room and had their meals in the room till evening, and all that time the sick man did not utter a sound. At nightfall the

More Tales from Tolstol

cook came to the stove, and pulled out the *tulup*^{*} from beneath his legs.

"Don't be angry, Nastasia," muttered the sick man, "but I beg of you to let me have your corner."

"All right, all right! Of course! what does it matter!" growled Nastasia, "but tell me, uncle, where does it hurt you?"

"All my inside is queer. God knows what's the matter."

"Never mind! Does your throat hurt you when you cough?"

"I ache all over. I'm going to die, that's what it is; oh, oh, oh!" groaned the sick man.

"Cover up your feet, that's what you've got to do," said Nastasia, coming down from the stove and spreading the *yarmak* over him on her way down.

During the night the night-lamp faintly lit the room. Nastasia and ten of the drivers slept on the floor or on benches, snoring loudly. Only the sick man feebly moaned, coughed, and turned from side to side upon the stove. By the morning he was quite still.

"I had such an odd dream last night," said the cook, stretching herself in the dim half-light of dawn, next morning; "it seemed to me as if I saw Uncle Khveder come down from the stove and go out to chop wood. 'How can I help you, Nassy?' says he, and I said to him, 'Why don't you go out and chop wood?' So he takes up the chopper and begins to chop wood, chopping it so quickly that the splinters flew about in every direction. 'Why, how's this?'

^{*} A sheepskin pelisse.

says I ; 'you were so ill.' 'No,' says he, 'I am well,' and as he kept moving his hands, a great terror fell upon me, and I shrieked and awoke. He can't be dead, surely? Uncle Khveder, Uncle Khveder, I say!"

But no sound came from Theodore.

"Surely he's not dead? Let's go and see!" said one of the drowsy drivers half awake.

The wasted hand, hanging down from the stove and covered with reddish hair, was cold and white.

"Go and tell the inspector! He seems to be dead," said the driver.

Theodore had no kinsfolk—he had outlived them all. Next day they buried him in the new churchyard behind the wood; and for the next few days Nastasia kept telling everyone of the strange vision she had seen and how she had been the first to miss Uncle Theodore.

III.

Spring had come. In the wet streets of the town, among the frozen manure-heaps gurgled scurrying streamlets; the colours of the garments and the conversation of the people moving about the town were bright and cheerful. In the little gardens behind the fences the buds of the trees were bursting forth, and their branches were rocked almost audibly by the fresh breezes. There was a universal thaw, a constant dripping of transparent drops. The sparrows were chirping tumultuously and darting about on their tiny wings. On the sunny side of the road, behind

More Tales from Tolstoi

fences, in town houses and country houses, everything was light and motion. In the sky, on the earth, and in the heart of man, youth and happiness revived.

In one of the principal streets, in front of a gentleman's mansion, fresh straw had been laid down; in the house was that selfsame dying invalid who had been so eager to go abroad.

At the closed doors of the bedchamber stood the husband of the invalid and a portly woman. On the divan sat a priest with dejected eyes, holding something wrapped up in an epitachilion. In a large arm-chair in a corner lay an old woman, the mother of the invalid, weeping convulsively. By her side stood a maid holding in her hand a clean pocket-handkerchief, and waiting till the old woman asked for it; another maid was rubbing the old woman's temples with something or other, and blowing under her cap among her grey hairs.

"Well, Christ be with you, my friend," said the husband to the stout woman standing by his side at the door (his wife's sister), "she has such confidence in you; you know how to talk to her, you see, so go in and persuade her nicely, my dear." He would have opened the door for her there and then, but the sister prevented him, at the same time dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief and shaking her head.

"Well, I don't look now as if I had been crying," said she, and, opening the door herself, she went in.

The husband was violently agitated, and seemed quite distraught. He made his way towards the old woman, but before he had taken more than a few

paces, he turned back, walked across the room and approached the priest. The priest looked up at him, raised his brows to heaven and sighed. His thick, grizzled beard rose aloft and sank down again simultaneously.

"My God! my God!" said the husband.

"What's to be done?" said the priest sighing, and again his brows and his beard rose and fell.

"And her mother there!" said the husband desperately. "It is more than she can bear. How she did love her . . . ! I don't know *what* to do. You, my father, do try and quiet her and induce her to go away from here."

The priest got up and went to the old woman.

"A mother's heart!—ah! who can estimate its love? yet God is merciful," said he.

The old woman's face suddenly became overcast and she began to sob.

- "God is merciful," repeated the priest when she had grown a little calmer. "I may also tell you that in my parish there was a sick woman much worse than Maria Dmitrievna, and what do you think?—a simple shopkeeper cured her by means of herbs in a short time. And this same shopkeeper is now in Moscow. I was telling Vasily Dmitrievich that we might try the experiment. At any rate, it might afford the patient relief. With God all things are possible."

"No, she won't live!" interrupted the old woman. "What will become of me if God takes her?" And she gave way to such passionate emotion that she lost consciousness.

More Tales from Tolstol

The husband of the invalid covered his face with his hands and rushed out of the room.

The first person he met in the corridor outside was his little lad, six years of age, chasing his little sister, and full of the spirit of the thing.

"What! Didn't they tell you to bring the children to mamma?" he asked the nurse.

"No, she didn't want to see them."

The little lad stopped for one instant, gazed intently at his father's face, suddenly kicked out his foot, and with a merry cry ran on further.

"She's pretending to be my little black horse," shrieked the lad, pointing at his little sister.

Meanwhile, in the other room, the sister was sitting by the side of the invalid, and, by means of an artfully prepared conversation, was endeavouring to prepare her for the thought of death. The doctor was mixing a draught at the other window.

The invalid, in a white dressing-gown, and propped up all round with pillows, was sitting up in bed and looking at her sister in silence.

"Ah, my friend," she cried, suddenly interrupting her, "don't prepare me! Don't take me for a child. I'm a Christian woman, I know all about it. I know I have not long to live. I know that if my husband had listened to me sooner I should now have been in Italy, and possibly—nay, certainly—would have been quite well. They all told him so. But what are we to do if God wills it so? We have all a great many sins to answer for, I know that; but I trust in God's mercy to forgive us all—I am sure He will forgive us all. I try to understand myself, and I know I have

Three Deaths

many sins to answer for, my friend. But then, what a lot I have suffered! I try to endure my sufferings patiently."

"Then let me send for the little father, my friend, it will be still easier for you to communicate," said the sister.

The invalid inclined her head by way of assent.

"God forgive me—a sinner!"—she murmured.

The sister went out and beckoned to the little father.

"She is an angel," she said to the husband with tears in her eyes.

The husband began to weep, the priest passed through the door, the old woman still remained unconscious, and everything in the antechamber was perfectly quiet. In about five minutes the priest came out of the door again, and, taking off the epitrachilion, smoothed his hair.

"Thank God she is calmer now," said he, "she wants to see you all."

The sister and the husband went in. The invalid was weeping softly and looking at the holy image.

"I congratulate you, my friend," said the husband.

"I thank you. How well it is with me now, what an inexpressible joy I feel," said the invalid, and a light smile played upon her thin lips. "How merciful God is!—is He not? He is merciful and almighty." And with an eager prayer on her lips and streaming eyes, she again gazed upon the holy image.

Suddenly something seemed to occur to her, she beckoned to her husband to draw near.

More Tales from Tolstol

"You never will do what I ask you," said she with a weak and querulous voice.

The husband, extending his neck, listened humbly

"What is it, my friend?"

"How many times haven't I said that these doctors know nothing? It is the simple medicines that really cure. . . . The little father has just been saying—there's a shopkeeper Send!"

"For whom, my friend?"

"My God, you will understand nothing," and the sick woman frowned and closed her eyes.

The doctor came up and took her hand. The pulse was plainly beating feebler and feebler. He beckoned to the husband. The invalid observed the gesture and looked round her in terror. The sister turned aside and wept.

"Don't wæp, don't torture yourself and me!" said the invalid—"it deprives me of the little calmness I have left."

"You are an angel," said the sister, kissing her hand.

"No, no, kiss me here! . . . it is only corpses whose hands we kiss! My God, my God!"

That same evening the invalid was already a corpse, and the corpse was placed upon a bier in the saloon of that large house. In that large apartment, with closed doors, sat a solitary *D'yachok*,* singing in cadence through his nose the Psalms of David. The bright light from the wax-candles on the large silver candelabra fell on the white forehead of the defunct, on her heavy waxen hands, on the stone-stiff folds

* A church singer.

of the pail, and on the frightfully prominent knees and toes. The *D'yachok*, without understanding what he was saying, went on reciting in a deliberately measured tone, and in that silent chamber the words sounded and died away strangely. Now and then, from a distant room, came flying the sound of childish voices and childish uproar. •

"When Thou hidest Thy Face they are troubled," saith the Psalter; "when Thou takest away their breath they die and return again to their dust. When Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit they arise and renew the face of the Earth. And the Glory of the Lord shall endure for ever."

The face of the defunct was solemn and majestic. The pure cold forehead, the firmly-closed lips, were motionless. She was all attention. But did she understand even then those sublime words?

IV.

~ In a month's time a marble monument was erected over the tomb of the deceased. The grave of the post-driver was still without its head-stone, and only the bright green grass had covered the little mound which served as the sole sign of the existence of a man who had passed away.

"Great will be your sin, Serega, if you do not buy a stone for Khveder," said the cook more than once. "You've been saying winter's time enough, winter's time enough, and even now you haven't kept your word. It was all said and done at my place remember."

More Tales from Tolstol

"Well, and have I said I wouldn't?" answered Serega. "I'll buy a stone as I said I would; I'll buy a stone I say if I pay a rouble and a half for it. I have not forgotten that it must be put up. Whenever I've occasion to go to town I'll buy it."

"You might, at any rate, put up a cross!*" put in an old driver, "it's downright bad of you—why, you're still wearing the boots!"

"Where shall I get a cross from?—you can't hew it without a log."

"Can't hew it without a log, eh? A nice excuse! Take an axe, go into the wood early, and then you'll hew it out easily enough! Cut down a young aspen, and that'll give you a *golubets** right enough."

Early in the morning, when day had scarce begun to dawn, Serega took his axe and went out into the wood.

Over everything lay a cold, whitish covering of still-falling dew, unilluminated by the sun. The east was brightening imperceptibly, and its feeble light was reflected on the fine passing clouds suspended in the vault of heaven. Not a single blade of grass below, not a single leaf on the high branches of the trees was astir. Only the rarely audible flutter of little wings in the thickest part of the forest, or a rustling on the ground disturbed the silence of the wood. Suddenly, a sound strange to Nature arose, and then died away again on the border of the forest. But again this sound arose, and began to be repeated at regular intervals on the ground below, around

* A grave cross, with a covering over it.

Three Deaths

the trunk of one of the motionless trees. Next the crown of one of the trees began to shiver unusually, its sappy leaves began to whisper something, and a wagtail sitting on one of its branches, took a hop or two, and then, waving its tail, hopped, with a faint piping cry, on to the next tree.

The axe below gave forth a deeper and deeper sound, sappy white chips began to fly about on the dewy grass, and a light cracking sound followed hard upon the blows. The whole body of the tree trembled, bent forward, and quickly righted itself again, tottering fearfully to its very roots. For an instant all was quiet, but again the tree stooped forward a little; the cracking in its trunk was again audible, and, smashing its branches and shedding abroad its twigs, it crashed down forwards on to the damp earth. The sounds of the axe and the footsteps ceased. The wagtail whistled again, and hopped a little higher. The branch to which it had been clinging rocked to and fro for a time, and then died like the rest with all its leaves. The other trees stood forth more beautifully and joyfully than ever, with their motionless branches in this new free space.

The first rays of the sun penetrating the transparent clouds lit up the heavens, and rapidly traversed earth and sky. The misty billows began to overflow the valleys, the glistening dew played upon the green foliage and herbage, transparent whitening clouds ran in haste across the blue vault of heaven. The birds swarmed restlessly in the depths of the forest, and, as if beside themselves, kept twittering

More Tales from Tolstol

delightfully ; the sappy leaves whispered joyously and calmly on the tree-tops, and the branches of the living trees gravely, sublimely, rustled over the dead body of the fallen tree.

X.—THE STORY OF IVAN THE FOOL

I.

ONCE upon a time, in a certain Kingdom in a certain Empire, dwelt a rich muzhik. And this rich muzhik had three sons—Simeon the Warrior, and Taras Big Paunch, and Ivan the Fool, and a daughter, Malan'ya Pitcher Ear, who was dumb. Simeon the Soldier went to war to serve the Tsar, Taras Big Paunch went to town to a merchant's to trade, and Ivan the Fool and the girl remained at home to work and earn stripes. Simeon the Warrior won for himself a high office and an estate, and married a gentleman's daughter. He had a large salary and a large estate, and yet he could not make both ends meet: what the husband gathered in the gentleman-wife scattered with both hands; there was never any money. And Simeon went to his estate to collect his rents. And his overseer said to him: "There is nothing to take; we have neither cattle, nor implements, nor horses, nor cows, nor ploughs, nor harrows; we must provide ourselves with everything, and then there'll be something to collect." And Simeon the Warrior went to his father and said: "Thou art rich, little father, yet hast thou given me

More Tales from Tolstol

nought. Give me a third portion, and I will go and settle down on my estate."

But the old man answered: "Thou hast added nought to the household; wherefore, then, should I give thee a third portion? It would be to the hurt and harm of Ivan and the girl."

But Simeon answered: "Why, he is but 'a fool, and she is a dumb, pitcher-eared thing; what good would it be to them?"

"But what does Ivan say about it?" asked the old man.

Ivan said: "What does it matter? Let him have it!"

So Simeon the Warrior took the third portion and departed to his estate, and then went away again to serve the Tsar.

And Taras 'Big Paunch' also earned a lot of money and married a merchant's daughter, yet all he had was too little for him. He also came to his father and said: "Give me my portion!"

The old man did not wish to give Taras his portion.

"Thou hast added nought to us," said he, "and Ivan hath earned all that is in the house. Nor can I injure him and the girl."

But Taras said: "What matters it to him? he's a fool! To marry him is impossible, nobody would take him; and the girl, too, is dumb, and of no use to anybody. Give me, Ivan," said he, "half of the corn. I won't take the farm implements, and of the cattle I will take only the dark-grey stallion—he is no good to you for ploughing, you know."

The Story of Ivan the Fool

Ivan began to laugh. "Well," said he, "I shall go and turn about a little more, that's all."

So they gave to Taras his portion also. Taras took the corn to town; he took also the dark-grey stallion, and left Ivan with nothing but an old mare to go on doing farm labourer's work as before, and support his father and mother.

II.

Now the Devil, that old serpent, was vexed that the brothers had not quarrelled over their affairs, and had parted amicably. And he called to him three of his imps.

"You see," said he, "how these three brothers live, Simeon the Warrior, and Taras Big Paunch, and Ivan the Fool. We ought to have set them all by the ears, and yet they live peaceably and treat one another hospitably. This fool has spoiled all my plans. Go now, ye three, and take these three brothers in hand, and vex them till they tear each other's eyes out. Can you do this?"

"We can," said the imps.

"How, then, will you set about it?"

"Thus will we do," said they. "First of all we'll ruin them all so utterly that they'll have nought to eat, and then we'll huddle them together into one heap, and they'll tear each other to pieces."

"Good!" said the Devil. "I see that you understand your business. And now be off, and don't come back to me till you have drawn the skins of all three of them over their ears."

More Tales from Tolstol

Then the three imps retired into a swamp and deliberated together as to how they should set about the business. They wrangled and wrangled; each one of them wanted to devise the easiest way to carry out the affair, and at last they decided to cast lots to determine what each of them was to do. And it was agreed that if any one of them should finish his part of the work before the others, he was to come and help the other two. So the imps cast lots, and fixed a time when they were again to come together in the swamp to find out which of them had finished his part of the work, and which of them wanted help to finish his.

The set time arrived, and the imps came together again in the swamp as agreed, to talk matters over. And they told one another how things had gone with them.

And the first imp began to tell them of Simeon the Warrior. "My affair is finished," said he. "Tomorrow my Simeon returns to his father," said he.

And his comrades fell to question him.

"How did you manage it?" they asked.

"First of all," said he, "I inspired Simeon with such valour that he promised his Tsar to win the whole world for him. And the Tsar made Simeon his chief captain and sent him to wage war against the Tsar of India. So they went forth to war. And the same night I moistened all the gunpowder in the army of Simeon, and then I went to the Indian Tsar and made him soldiers out of straw, as many as the eye could see, and more. The soldiers of Simeon

The Story of Ivan the Fool

saw the straw soldiers advancing upon them from all sides, and they were afraid. Simeon ordered them to fire the guns, and the guns would not go off. The soldiers of Simeon were terrified, and ran away like sheep. And the Indian Tsar routed them. Simeon was wounded, and they took away from him his estate and would have punished him on the morrow. But I came at the nick of time and released him from prison in order that he might run away home. To-morrow my part of the job will be finished; but say, now, which of you two requires help?"

Then the second imp began to tell them how he had fared with Taras.

"I have no need of your help," said he, "my little affair is also going along swimmingly. Taras wont hold out for another week, I know.* First of all," said he, "I made his big paunch stick out more than ever, and inspired him with envy. So envious did he become of other folks' goods that whatever he saw he wanted to buy. He bought all that his eye could see, and more; he spent all his money, and he bought yet more besides. Now he has begun to buy on credit. He has saddled himself finely, I can tell you, and is so involved that he will never be able to disengage himself. In a week it will be settling day, and I will turn all his wares into rubbish; he will not be able to pay, and will return to his father's house."

• Then they began asking the third imp about Ivan. 'How did *your* affair go off?" they asked.

"Well, my affair hasn't come off, at all," said he.

More Tales from Tolstoi

"First of all I spat into his *kuks** pitcher so as to make his body ache, and I went over his fields and beat the ground till it was as hard as a stone, so that he could do nothing with it. I thought he would not plough it up, but he, fool as he is, came along with his plough and began to toil away. He groaned because his body ached, but he went on ploughing all the same. I broke one ploughshare for him, but home he went, put another to rights, harnessed two fresh horses to it, and again set to work ploughing. I crept up from under the ground to hold the ploughshares, but I couldn't hold them fast anyhow; then I laid me on the plough, but the ploughshares were very sharp and cut my hands to pieces. He ploughed up nearly the whole field—only one little strip remained, and so just because we have not got the better of this one fellow all our labour is thrown away. If the fool is let alone and continues to do labourer's work the other two will want for nothing, for he will support his two brothers." —

Then Simeon the Warrior's imp promised to come and help his fellow imp on the morrow, whereupon the three imps separated.

Ivan had ploughed up all his field, only one tiny strip remained unploughed. He came the next day to finish his ploughing. His body ached, but the ploughing had to be done. He saw to the harness-gear, turned the plough round, and began to plough.

* An evil leverage of the Russian peasants.

The Story of Ivan the Fool

He had made the turn of the field once, and was coming back when, just as if it had stuck to some root, the plough began to drag heavily. It was the little imp, who had wound his legs firmly round the ploughshare, and was holding on fast. "What marvel is this?" thought Ivan, "there are no roots here, yet it is a root." Ivan thrust his hand into the furrow and felt it—it was soft. He seized upon something and drew it forth. It was like a black root, and on the root something was moving. Lo and behold! it was a live imp. "Ugh; 'tis thou, then, thou filthy one!" said Ivan. Ivan swung his hand round and would have smashed the imp, but the imp besought him.

"Don't beat me," said he, "and I'll do whatever you desire."

"What can you do for me?"

"Only say what you want!"

Ivan scratched his head. "My stomach aches," said he at last, "can you put it right?"

"Yes," said the imp.

"Then cure it!"

The imp bent over the furrow and scraped and scraped with his nails, and drew out a little root, or rather three little roots intertwined, and gave them to Ivan.

"Look!" said he, "whoever swallows one of these tiny roots loses all his pains."

So Ivan took it, broke off one little root, and swallowed it. And immediately his stomach was quite well.

Again the imp besought him. "Let me go now!"

More Tales from Tolstol

said he. "I will vanish through the earth, I don't want to roam about any more."

"Very well," said Ivan, "God be with you!" And no sooner had he pronounced the name of God than the imp vanished rapidly under the earth like a stone dropped into water, leaving nothing but a hole in the ground behind him. And Ivan thrust the other two little roots into his hat and went on ploughing till he had finished. He ploughed away to the very end of the little unploughed strip, turned his plough about, and went home. He entered the house, and there was his elder brother, Simeon the Warrior, sitting down with his wife and having supper. They had taken away his property, he had escaped from his dungeon by the skin of his teeth, and he had run home to live with his father.

Simeon caught sight of Ivan. "I have come to live with you," said he; "feed me and my wife till we have found a fresh place for ourselves."

"All right," said he, "you may live here if you like."

All that Ivan wanted was to sit down at the end of the bench, but the smell of Ivan was by no means agreeable to the gentlewoman-wife of Simeon the Soldier. "I cannot have my supper with a stinking muzhik," said she to her husband.

Then said Simeon the Soldier: "My lady," said he, "does not like your smell, you had better eat your supper in the outhouse."

"All right," said Ivan. "It is also time for me to go to bed and feed the mare."

So Ivan took his bread and his caftan and went to his night lodging.

The Story of Ivan the Fool

IV.

That night the imp of Simeon the Soldier, having finished the work he had in hand, went, according to agreement, to seek the imp of Ivan to assist him to do for the fool. He went into the ploughed field and searched and searched for his comrade, but nowhere was he to be found—all he could see was a hole in the ground. "Well," thought he, "some mischief must have happened to my comrade; I must take his place. The field has been ploughed to the very end. We must torment the fool out of his wits in the hay field."

So the imp went into the meadow and fell upon Ivan's hay crop, and he covered the whole of the hay with mud. At dawn of day Ivan left his bed, took out his scythe and went into the meadow to mow. Ivan reached the meadow and began to mow; he swung his arm round once or twice, the scythe was blunted and would not cut—he had to sharpen it. Ivan exerted his whole strength again and again. "No, it is no good," said he, "I will go home and bring out a bench and a big round hearthcake. If I have to toil and moil for a week I won't leave off till I have mowed this field from one end to the other."

The imp heard this, and thought to himself: "This fool is a regular out-and-outer, there's no getting over him. We must have resort to something else."

•So Ivan came, took out his scythe, and began to mow. The imp crept through the grass and seized the scythe by the blade in order to shove the sharp

More Tales from Tolstoi

end into the ground. It was hard work for Ivan, but he mowed away to the very end—at last only a little bit of rough ground on the swamp remained. The imp crept into the swamp, and he thought to himself: "Even if I lose my paws by it, I'll not allow him to mow the place to the very end." Ivan waded into the swamp; from the look of it the grass did not seem very thick, yet the scythe could not turn it over. Ivan grew wroth, he began to swing his arms with all his might; the imp began to give in, he could not leap back quickly enough; he saw that it was a bad business, and he hid himself in the bushes. Ivan swung his arms still more vigorously, came trampling through the bushes and sliced off half of the imp's tail. Ivan mowed his field to the very end, ordered the wench to rake it together, while he himself went to mow his rye.

He went out with a reaping-hook, and the imp with the docked tail, who was already on the spot, tangled all the rye so that the hook could make no way with it. Ivan turned him about, took a sickle, and began to mow the rye down, and mowed every bit of the rye. "I must now go and gather the rye," said he.

The imp with the docked tail heard this and thought: "I couldn't manage the rye, but I'll go and play havoc with the oats; only wait till to-morrow!" The imp came running in the early morning to the oat field, and the oats were already mown. Ivan had mown it down in the night so as to waste no time. The imp was very wroth. "This fool," said he, "has maimed and tormented me. In warfare,

The Story of Ivan the Fool

even, I have not seen such wounds. The accursed one never sleeps, and there is no overtaking him. I'll now go to the ricks and spoil the whole lot of them for him."

And the imp went to the rye ricks and crept among the sheaves and began to spoil them: he warmed them well and warmed himself, and then fell asleep.

But Ivan harnessed the mare and came along with the wench to carry away the corn. He came to the rye ricks and began to pitch the sheaves, one by one, on to the wagon. He pitched down two sheaves, thrust in his hand for another, and caught the imp from behind. He raised it up and looked at it. There was a live imp struggling on the pitchfork and his tail was docked, and the creature was writhing and struggling and trying to get away.

"Hillo! thou filthy one, here, again, eh?" cried Ivan.

"That was my brother. I am another one. I was with your brother Simeon the Soldier," said the imp.

"Well," said Ivan, "whether you were here before or not, your fate shall be the same," and he would have smashed the vile thing there and then. But the imp besought him, saying:

"Let me go and I'll do nothing more, and I'll also do whatever you want."

"But what can you do?"

"I can make soldiers out of whatever you like."

"But what's the good of them?"

"They can do whatever you turn them to, they can do everything."

More Tales from Tolstol

"Can they sing songs?"

"Yes, they can."

"Then make them for me," said Ivan.

And the imp said: "Look now! take one of these rye sheaves, shake it on the ground, and say only these words:

'By my henchman's leave
Cease to be a sheaf!'

and you'll have as many soldiers as you have straws in your hand."

Ivan took the sheaf, shook it on the ground, and said as the imp had bidden him. And the sheaf leapt asunder and the straws turned into soldiers, and in front of them marched the drummer drumming and the trumpeter trumpeting. And Ivan laughed heartily when he saw it.

"Aye! but you're clever," said he. "This is capital—it will amuse the wench."

"And now," said the imp, "let me go!"

"No," said Ivan, "I shall only do this thing for sport, but not a grain of corn shall be thrown away for nothing. Teach me how to turn them into sheaves again. I shall want to thresh them out."

And the imp said: "Say:

'So many soldiers,
So many straw stalks,
By my henchman's command
As sheaves again stand.'

Ivan said this, and the soldiers became sheaves again.

The Story of Ivan the Fool

Then the imp besought him again and said : " Let me go now ! "

" Very well," said Ivan, and pressing him down, he stretched out his arm and pulled him off the pitchfork. " In God's name," said he ; and no sooner had he spoken of God than the imp plunged under ground like a stone thrown in the water, and only a hole remained.

Ivan went home, and at home he found his second brother, Taras, sitting down with his wife having supper. Taras Big Paunch had not settled his accounts, but had run away from his debts and gone to his father. Now he caught sight of Ivan.

" Hillo, Ivan ! " said he, " while I look about me a bit you must feed me and my wife."

" Very well," said Ivan, " you may live here if you like."

Then Ivan took off his caftan and sat down to table.

But the merchant's wife said : " I cannot eat with the fool, he smells of sweat,"

Then Taras Big Paunch also said : " You have not a nice smell, Ivan, go and take you meals in the shed."

" All right ! " said he, and taking up his bread he went into the yard. " It just suits me," said he, " I can now feed the mare at the right time."

V.

The imp of Taras Big Paunch left him that same evening, and went to help his comrades, as arranged,

More Tales from Tolstol

to get the better of Ivan the Fool. He went into the ploughed field and searched for his comrades, but there was no trace of them—all that he saw was a hole in the ground. He went to the meadow and there, near the swamp, he found part of a tail, and in the stubble field where the rye ricks were he found another hole. "Well," thought he, "'tis plain some mischief has befallen my comrades. I must step into their shoes and take this fool in hand myself."

So the imp went to look for Iván. Now Ivan had already risen, and was cutting wood in the forest.

The brothers, now that they lived together, found themselves straitened for room, and had bidden the fool go to the forest to cut wood and build them new houses.

The imp ran into the forest, climbed on to a twig, and began to hamper Ivan in his endeavours to fell a tree. Ivan had cut down the tree in such a way as to make it fall where it ought to fall, in a clear space, but the tree fell badly, where it ought not to have fallen, and stuck in some branches. Ivan cut out a section of it and began to force it over sideways—only with the utmost exertion did he succeed at last in felling the tree. Then Ivan set about cutting down another, and it was just the same thing over again. He toiled and moiled, and only by the utmost efforts did he fell the tree clear. He tackled a third, and again it was the same thing all over again. Ivan had thought of cutting out half a hundred lathes, and he had not cut ten and already night was at the door. And Ivan was sore vexed. A steaming sweat streamed from off him like a mist

The Story of Ivan the Fool

rising from a forest, and yet he did not throw up his task. He went on chopping wood, and his back began to ache till he could scarce stand, so he laid aside his axe and sat him down to rest.

The imp heard how Ivan had suddenly become quite quiet, and rejoiced greatly. "Ah! ha!" thought the imp, "he is tired out—he has chucked it. I shall be able to rest a bit, too, now." And he sat astraddle on his twig and rejoiced.

But Ivan, getting up again, seized his axe, stretched out his arms, and hewed away on the other side, till suddenly the tree began to crack and came thundering down.

This time the imp was not quick enough; he did not draw out his leg in time, the twig broke, and the imp was caught fast by the paw. Ivan began clearing away the ground, and lo! there was a live imp. Ivan was astonished.

- "Ugh, there you are again, vilest one!" said Ivan.
- "I am not that imp, but another. I was with your brother Taras," said the imp.

"Well, whichever you are, your fate will be the same!" And Ivan waved his axe, and would have smitten him dead with the back of it.

Then the imp besought him. "Kill me not," said he, "and I will do whatever you wish me to do."

"And what can you do, then?"

"I can make as much money for you as you want."

"Come along, then, and make some!"

And the imp taught him the trick.

"Take," said he, "a leaf from that oak and rub it

More Tales from Tolstol

between your hands, and gold will fall upon the ground."

And Ivan took the leaves and rubbed them, and showers of gold fell all around them.

"That will be very nice," said Ivan, "when we play games with the children on festivals."

"And now let me go!" said the imp.

"Very well," replied Ivan, and released the imp. "God be with you!" said he. And no sooner had he named the name of God than the imp plunged beneath the ground like a stone into the water, leaving but a hole behind him.

VI.

The brothers built up their house and lived apart. But Ivan, having done his work in the fields, brewed beer and invited his brothers to come and make merry with him. But the brothers would not be Ivan's guests. "Clodhopper merriment," said they, "we will take no notice of."

So Ivan feasted the muzhiks and the women, and drank a good skinful himself, and went out tipsy into the street to take part in the round dances. Ivan approached the dancers and bade the women exalt him and call him father.

"I'll give you," said he, "things the like of which you have never seen before."

The women began to laugh, and called him all sorts of high-sounding names. And when they had made an end of praising him they said: "Come

The Story of Ivan the Fool

along, now! give us something as you said you would."

"I'll bring you something immediately," said he, and seizing a seed-box he rushed off into the forest. The women began to laugh, and said: "Ha! ha! what a fool it is!" and they forgot all about him. But look! Ivan comes running back from the forest again, and he carries his seed-box full of something.

"Have some, eh?"

"Yes, yes, give us some!"

Then Ivan thrust his hand into the seed-box, drew out a fist full of gold, and threw it to the women. "Oh, little father!" cried they, and the women flung themselves on the gold and began to pick it up. Then the men also came running out, and fought each other for it. One old woman was nearly crushed to death. Ivan fell a-laughing.

"Ah! you fools!" said he, "why do you trample on the old woman? Come out of that and I'll give you even more." And he flung more and more among them. The people came running together, and Ivan emptied the whole seed-box among them. They asked him for still more.

But Ivan said: "That's all. Another time I'll give you some more. Now dance a bit and sing songs."

Then the women began to sing songs.

"Your singing is not good," said he.

"Can you do it better?" said they.

"I'll show you that straight away," he answered. And he went into the barn and drew out a sheaf, brought it down, placed it on the ground, and gave it a smart tap. "Well," cried he:

More Tales from Tolstoi

"With my henchman's leave,
Cease to be a sheaf,
And for each little stalk
Let a soldier walk!"

And the sheaf leaped asunder, and every separate straw became a soldier, with drums and trumpets all playing merrily. Then Ivan bade the soldiers play songs, and marched with them down the street. The good folks were amazed. So when the soldiers had played their songs a little while, Ivan led them back into the barn, forbidding anyone to follow after him, and turned the soldiers into a sheaf again, and flung it on to the rick. Then he went home and lay down to sleep in the cow-house.

VII.

In the morning the elder brother, Simeon the Soldier, heard of all these goings on, so he came to Ivan.

"Reveal to me," said he, "where you got the soldiers from, and where you have stowed them."

"What is that to you?" said Ivan.

"What is that to me? Why, with soldiers you can do everything. You can even gain yourself a kingdom."

Ivan was astounded. "Why didn't you tell me so long ago?" said he. "I will make for you as many as you please. Why, the wench and I will have a fine time of it." And Ivan led his brother into the barn and said: "Look now! I'll make 'em for you, and you can march 'em away, for when it comes

The Story of Ivan the Fool

to feeding them they would swallow up the whole village. Simeon the Warrior promised to lead away the soldiers, and Ivan set about making them. He tapped on the threshing-floor with the sheaf, and there stood a regiment; he tapped with another sheaf and there stood another; he made such a lot of soldiers that the whole field was full of them.

"Is that enough for you, eh?"

Simeon was delighted and said. "That'll do. Thanks, Ivan."

"All right! If you want any more, come here and I'll make 'em for you. There are lots of straw stalks going now."

So Simeon the Warrior marshalled his soldiers on the spot, put them into proper order, and went off to the wars.

No sooner had Simeon the Warrior departed than Taras Big Paunch arrived. He, too, had heard of the goings-on yester evening, and began to beseech his brother. "Reveal to me," said he, "where you got all those gold coins. If I had so much money at my disposal I could add more and more money to it and bring it in from every corner of the earth."

Ivan was astonished. "Why didn't you tell me so before?" said he. "I will rub out for you as many as you please."

His brother was delighted. "Give me three seed-boxes full," said he.

"Come along, then, into the forest," said Ivan, "and put to the horse that you may carry it all away; you can't carry it."

More Tales from Tolstol

So they went into the forest, and Ivan began plucking leaves from the trees and rubbing them between his hands. Soon he had strewn abroad a large heap.

"Will that do you, eh?"

Taras was delighted. "That will do for the present. Thanks, Ivan."

"Pooh!" said he, "if ever you want any more come to me, I will rub out a lot more—there are heaps of leaves left."

So Taras Big Paunch carried off a whole cart-load of money, and went off to trade with it.

Both the elder brothers had departed therefore. Simeon the Warrior had gone to the wars and Taras had gone to trade. And Simeon the Warrior won a kingdom by his warfare, and Taras Big Paunch made a whole pile of money by trading.

And the two brothers met together and told each other all about themselves. Simeon told Taras whence he had got his soldiers, and Taras told Simeon whence he had got his money.

Moreover, Simeon the Warrior said to his brother: "I have now won a kingdom by my warfare, and it is well with me, only I want money to feed my soldiers."

And Taras Big Paunch said: "I, too, have made a mountain of money, only the worst of it is I have none to guard it, and that bothers me."

"Come, then!" said Simeon to Taras, "let us go to our brother. I will bid him make some more soldiers, and I'll give them to you to guard your money, and you must bid him rub out some more

The Story of Ivan the Fool

money that I may have the wherewithal to feed my soldiers."

So they went to seek Ivan.

They came to Ivan, and Simeon said to him : "Little brother, my soldiers are too few for me ; make me some more soldiers—two more sheaves will do it if you change them." 4

Ivan shook his head. "It's no good," said he, "I'll make you no more soldiers."

"But how is this? You promised you would!"

"I promised," said he, "but I'll make no more."

"But why won't you make any more, you fool?"

"Because your soldiers kill people. A day or two ago I was walking along the road and what do I see? a woman digging a grave by the road, and she was weeping. I asked her: 'Who is dead?' And she said: 'Simeon's soldiers have slain my husband.' I thought that soldiers were only for singing songs, and they murder people. I'll make no more of them."

And he was obstinate, and would make no more soldiers.

And Taras Big Paunch also began asking Ivan the Fool to make him some more gold pieces.

Ivan shook his head. "It's no good," said he, "I'll rub no more"

"But how is this? You promised you would."

"I promised," said he, "and I will rub no more."

"But why won't you, you fool?"

"Because your gold pieces took away Mikhailov's cow."

"Took away! How?"

"'Twas thus. Mikhailov had a cow, and it gave

More Tales from Tolstol

milk to the children, and a day or two ago the children came to me and begged for milk. 'But where is your cow?' I said to them. They said: 'Taras Big Paunch's overseer came along and gave mammy three gold pieces for the cow, and she gave him the cow, and now we've no milk to sup.' I thought gold pieces were only counters to play with, and you take away the children's cow with them. I'll give no more."

And the fool was obstinate, and would give no more. So the brothers went away.

The brothers went away and consulted together how they might best cure the mischief. And Simeon said: "Look now! I'll tell you what we will do. You give me money to feed my soldiers, and I'll give you half a kingdom, with soldiers to guard your money." And Taras consented. So the brothers divided their goods, and both of them became kings, and both were very rich.

VIII.

But Ivan stayed at home and nourished his father and mother, and laboured in the fields with his dumb sister.

Now, one day Ivan's old house-dog fell sick and grew mangy, and was on the point of expiring. Ivan was sorry for it. He got some bread from the dumb girl, put it into his hat, and carried it out to the dog and threw it to him. Now, the hat was torn, and along with the bread a little root fell out of it, and the old dog snapped it up with the bread. And no

The Story of Ivan the Fool

sooner had it swallowed the little root than the dog began to skip and play about, and barked and wagged its tail, and was quite well.

Ivan's father and mother saw it, and were astonished.

But Ivan said: "I had two little roots which cure every disease, and the dog must have swallowed one."

And it happened about this time that the King's daughter fell ill, and the King proclaimed throughout all the towns and villages that whoever cured his daughter the King would reward him, and if the man were a bachelor he would give him this selfsame daughter to wife. And this proclamation was made in Ivan's village also.

Then his father and mother called Ivan and said to him: "Have you heard what the King has proclaimed? You said you had a healing root; go now and cure the King's daughter. You will be happy ever after."

"All right!" cried Ivan, and he prepared to go. They dressed him up, and Ivan came out on the top of the staircase, and there stood a poor beggar with a crooked arm.

"I have heard," said he, "that you can cure diseases. Cure my arms, for I cannot even put on my boots."

"All right!" said Ivan, and he got out the root, gave it to the poor beggar, and told him to swallow it. And the poor beggar swallowed the root and was quite cured, and immediately began to wave his arms about. Then Ivan's father and mother came out to lead him to the King, and when they heard that Ivan had given away his last little root and had

More Tales from Tolstol

nothing left to cure the King's daughter with they began to curse him.

"He had pity on this beggar-man," said they "and had no pity on the King's daughter."

Then Ivan felt sorry for the King's daughter also, so he harnessed his horse, flung some straw stalks in a chest, and prepared to drive off.

"Where are you going, you fool?"

"To cure the King's daughter."

"But you have nought to cure her with."

"All right!" cried he, and whipped up the horses.

He came to the King's Court, and no sooner had he begun to mount the staircase than the King's daughter was cured.

The King rejoiced greatly, and commanded that Ivan should be brought before him, and they dressed him in gallant array.

"Will you be my son-in-law?" said the King.

"All right!" said Ivan, so they married Ivan to the Princess. Soon after that the King died, and Ivan became king. So all three brothers were now kings.

IX.

So the three brothers lived and ruled as kings.

With the elder brother, Simeon the Warrior, things went well. He got real soldiers by means of his straw soldiers. He commanded that every ten houses throughout his kingdom should furnish him with a soldier, and each of these soldiers was to have a big frame and a white body and a clean face. And he got together a great many of such soldiers and taught

The Story of Ivan the Fool

them their business thoroughly. And if anyone thwarted him in aught, immediately he sent forth these soldiers and did whatsoever seemed good to him.

And everyone began to fear Simeon the Warrior.

And his life was a good and pleasant thing. Whatever he imagined, and whatever he fixed his eyes upon, that thing became his. The soldiers went out and took away and bought in and appropriated everything that he wanted.

And life was a good and pleasant thing to Taras Big Paunch likewise. He did not lose the money he had got from Ivan, but more money grew out of it. And he, too, kept good order in his kingdom. His own money he stowed away in chests, and squeezed more money out of the people. He squeezed money from their going to and fro, and from their bast shoes, and from their sandals, and from the lappets of their garments, and from their very souls. And whatsoever his heart desired that he had. They brought everything to him for the sake of a few little coins, and they came to work for him because everyone wanted money.

Nor did Ivan the Fool have a bad time of it. No sooner had he buried his father-in-law than he took off all his royal robes and gave them to his wife to hide away in a big chest, put on again his working shirt and trousers and his sandals, and set to work again. "I feel dull," he said, "and my belly will grow big, and I shall neither eat nor sleep." So he fetched his father and mother and dumb sister, and set to work again.

More Tales from Tolstol

"But you're the King!" said they.

"Well!" said he, "and I mean to have the appetite of a king."

His Minister came to him and said: "We have no money to pay salaries with."

"All right!" said he, "if you have no money don't pay them."

"But in that case people wont serve."

"All right!" said Ivan, "let them not serve, they will be at more liberty to work. Let them cart the manure, there's lots of it to cart."

And they came to Ivan that he might judge between them. And one said: "He has robbed me of my money."

"All right!" said Ivan; "no doubt he wanted it."

They all recognised that Ivan was a fool. Even his wife said to him: "They say that you are a fool."

"All right!" said he.

Ivan's wife fell a-thinking and a-thinking about it, and she also became a fool.

"Why should I go against my husband?" said she. "Where there's a needle there there's a thread." So she took off her royal raiment and packed it away in a chest, and went to the dumb wench to learn from her how to work. And she learnt how to work, and began to help her husband.

And all the sensible folks left Ivan's kingdom—only the fools remained in it. And not one of them had any money. They lived and worked and supported themselves, and they also supported good people.

The Story of Ivan the Fool

X.

Now the old Devil waited and waited for news from the three imps as to how they had set the three brothers by the ears. He waited and waited, and no news came. He himself went out for news, and searched and searched, but nothing could he discover but three holes. "Well," thought he, "it is clear they have not prevailed. I must see to this business myself."

He pursued his investigations, and there was no trace of the brothers in their old quarters. He found them at last in different kingdoms, and all three of them were reigning monarchs. And the thing offended the old Devil.

"Well," said he, "I'll take this matter in hand myself."

And first of all he went to King Simeon. Not in his own shape did he go, but he turned himself into a general, and so he came to King Simeon. "I have heard," said he, "that you, King Simeon, are a great warrior, and I myself am well versed in this business, and I would serve you."

King Simeon thereupon put sundry questions to him, saw that he was a wise man, and took him into his service.

And the new general of King Simeon began to show him how to collect together a large army.

"The first thing," said he, "is to enlist more soldiers, and in your kingdom there are a great many people who only play the fool. You must take," said he, "all the young men without exception, and then

More Tales from Tolstol

your army will be five times larger than it was before. The next thing you must do is to introduce new weapons and firearms. I will supply you with firearms which will fire off one hundred bullets a time as if they were so many peas. And I will supply you with cannons which will belch forth fire continuously. Everything will be burnt up, whether it be men, or horses, or walls."

King Simeon obeyed his new general, and ordered all the young men, one after another, to be made into soldiers, and introduced new gun factories, and they turned out new firearms and cannons, and immediately declared war upon the neighbouring king. No sooner were the armies face to face than King Simeon commanded his soldiers to fire flames and bullets out of his guns and firearms, and immediately one half of the hostile army was crippled and consumed. The neighbouring king was frightened and submitted, and surrendered his kingdom.

Simeon the Warrior was delighted. "And now," said he, "I will war against the King of India."

But the King of India had heard about Simeon the Warrior, and borrowed from him all his inventions, and added thereto still more of his own. The King of India took for soldiers not only all the young men but all the unmarried women also, so he got together an army even larger than the army of Simeon the Warrior, and he borrowed, too, the ideas of all his guns and firearms from Simeon the Warrior, and devised besides aerial machines, which should hurl down mangling bombs from above.

King Simeon and his army therefore went against

The Story of Ivan the Fool

the King of India, and Simeon thought that he could conquer as before, and mow down everything before him. But the King of India did not allow Simeon the Warrior to have the first shot, but sent his women soldiers up into the air to cast down mangling bombs on to the army of Simeon. And the women stood above the army of Simeon like a storm above a lot of cockroaches, and they cast down bombs and dispersed the whole army of Simeon the Warrior till only Simeon himself was left. The Indian King then seized the army of Simeon, and Simeon the Warrior fled from before the eyes of men.

So the old Devil got the better of the elder brother, and next he went to King Taras. He turned himself into a merchant, and settled down in the kingdom of Taras and began to start business and circulate money. The merchant gave a high price for everything, and all the people flocked to him to make money. And the people made so much money that they paid all their arrears of taxation, and all the taxes due from them were paid instantly.

King Taras rejoiced. "Thanks to this merchant," thought he, "I shall now have more money than ever, and life will be an even better thing than it was before."

And King Taras began to have new ideas, and began to build himself a new palace. And he proclaimed to the people that they should bring him timber and stone and work for him, and offered high prices for everything. And King Taras fancied that the people would come flocking after his money as before, and work for him. But behold! they were

More Tales from Tolstol

carrying all the wood and all the stone to the merchant, and all the working people were flocking to him. King Taras offered still more, but the merchant out-bid him. King Taras had a lot of money, but the merchant had still more, and the merchant prevailed over the King. The royal palace was at a standstill ; it could not be built. King Taras laid out a garden. Autumn came, and King Taras invited the people to come and plant his garden for him. Not one of them came ; they were all engaged in digging a pond for the merchant. Winter came. King Taras thought of buying sable skins to make him a new fur pelisse. He sent forth to buy some, but his messenger came back and told him that there were no sables to be had—all the pelts were in the possession of the merchant ; he offered more for them than the King, and was making carpets of the sables. King Taras wanted to buy stallions. He sent out his servants to buy some, but his messengers came back and said : All the good stallions are at the merchant's, and they are carrying water for him to fill his pond. All the King's affairs were at a standstill ; people did nought for him and did everything for the merchant, and they only brought him the merchant's money to pay their taxes with.

And the King had such a heap of money that he knew not where to stow it, and his life was wretched. The King ceased to plan great plans ; if only he could keep body and soul together that was enough for him now, and even this he could scarce do. He was straitened in every direction. Even his cook and his coachman wouldn't stop with him, but

The Story of Ivan the Fool

went over to the merchant. At last he had not enough victuals to feed himself with. He sent out into the bazaar to buy some; there were none to be had, the merchant had bought them all up, and all the King now had was the money with which they paid the taxes.

King Taras grew wroth, and banished the merchant from his kingdom. But the merchant settled down just outside his borders, and did the same as before: everything to be sold departed from the King and went after the merchant and his money. The King was indeed in evil case. All day long he had nothing to eat, and the rumour spread that the merchant boasted he would buy up the King himself. King Taras was afraid, and knew not what would become of him.

And now Simeon the Warrior came to him and said: "Help me, the King of India has conquered my kingdom."

But King Taras himself was in a tight place.

"I have had nothing to eat for two days," said he.

XI.

Thus the old Devil subdued the two elder brothers, and now he went on to Ivan. The old Devil turned himself into a general, and tried to persuade him to raise an army. "It becomes not a king to live without an army," said he; "give but the command and I'll raise up soldiers for you out of your people and make an army for you."

Ivan listened to him. "All right!" said he; "let's

More Tales from Tolstol

have an army, then, and teach them to play nice music ; that's what I love."

And the old Devil made the circuit of Ivan's kingdom to select volunteers. And he told them all to clean shave, and promised them a *scoop* of *vodka* and a nice coloured cap.

The fools burst out laughing. "We have lots of wine already," said they ; "we make it ourselves, and as for caps, our old women sew them together for us as many as we like, nice variegated ones, and with pretty fringes into the bargain."

So not one of them would come. The old Devil thereupon went to Ivan. "Your fools won't come willingly," said he, "we must drive them to it by force."

"All right!" said Ivan ; "drive them by force, then!"

And the old Devil announced that all the people were to come to be enrolled as soldiers, and whoever did not come him would Ivan put to death.

Then the fools came to the general and said : "You tell us that if we do not come to be soldiers the King will put us to death, but you do not tell us what will become of us when we are soldiers. They say that soldiers become soldiers to be killed, is this so?"

"Yes, it cannot but be so."

When the fools heard this they were still more obstinate.

"We won't come," said they. "Better far to allow ourselves to be killed at home. Death we cannot avoid anyhow."

The Story of Ivan the Fool

"Fools that you are!" said the old Devil; "you may or may not be killed if you become soldiers, but if you will not come, King Ivan will certainly put you to death."

The fools thought it well over, and then they came to Ivan the Fool and asked him saying: "The general has proclaimed that you have commanded us all to become soldiers. 'If you go to be soldiers,' he said, 'you may or you may not be killed, but if you do not go, King Ivan will certainly put you to death.' Is that true?"

Ivan laughed.

"How can I, one man, put all you to death? If I were not a fool I would explain it all to you, but I wouldn't go myself."

"Then we will not go," said they.

So the fools went to the general and refused to become soldiers.

The old Devil saw that it was no go, so he went to the King of Tarakan and wormed himself into his confidence.

"Let us go," said he, "and conquer the kingdom of King Ivan; the only thing he hasn't got is money, but he has plenty of corn and cattle and other good things."

So the King of Tarakan went to war. He collected a large army, many firearms, no end of guns, crossed the border, and entered the kingdom of Ivan.

They came to Ivan and said: "The King of Tarakan is waging war upon us."

"All right," said he, "let him come!"

The King of Tarakan crossed the border with his

More Tales from Tolstol

army, and sent forth his advance guard to seek everywhere for the army of Ivan. They sought and sought, but there was no trace of any army. They waited and waited, but there was no appearance of an army anywhere. And the rumour spread—there is no army and none to fight with. The King of Tarakan sent forth soldiers to seize the villages. The soldiers came to one village, and all the fools, male and female, came rushing out to look at the soldiers and wonder at them. The soldiers began to take away the corn and cattle of the fools, and the fools gave them away, and none said the soldiers nay. The soldiers came to another village, and it was the same thing over again. They gave up everything, none resisted, but called to the soldiers to come and live with them. "If ye have a bad time of it, dear friends," said they, "come and live with us altogether." The soldiers went on and on—there was no army to be seen, and the whole people lived on what they produced, and fed themselves and all good folks, and did not resist, and called to the soldiers to come and live with them.

The soldiers found things dull, and they came back to the King of Tarakan and said: "There is no warfare to wage here, take us to some other place. Real war ye understand, but this is like flogging a dead horse. We cannot wage war here any more."

The King of Tarakan was angry, and he bade the soldiers go through the whole kingdom and destroy the villages and houses, and burn the corn and kill all the cattle. "If you do not obey my command," said he, "I will punish you."

The Story of Ivan the Fool

Then the soldiers were afraid, and they began to do their King's command. They began to burn the corn and the houses and to kill the cattle. And all along the fools did not resist, but only wept. The old men wept, and the old women wept, and the little children wept.

"Why do you harm us like this?" they cried. "Why do you repay good with evil? If you want it you had better take it away for yourselves."

Then the soldiers felt they had had enough of it. They went no further, and the whole army dispersed.

XII.

Then the old Devil departed—he had not prevailed over Ivan with his soldiers.

Then the old Devil turned himself into an honest gentleman, and came to live in the kingdom of Ivan; he would try to prevail over him by means of his money as he had prevailed with Taras Big Paunch.

"I want to do good to you," said he; "I want to teach you a thing or two. I want to build a house in your kingdom and start a business," said he.

"All right!" they said, "live as you please."

The honest gentleman passed the night there, and next morning he went out into the market-place carrying a large basket full of gold and leaves of paper, and he said: "You are all living like swine, I want to teach you how you ought to live. You build me a house according to this plan. You work, and I'll show you how to do it, and I'll pay you golden coins for it." And he showed them the gold.

More Tales from Tolstol

The fools were astonished: they had no stores of money laid by, and they exchanged with each other whatever things they wanted, and paid for it by labour. So they were astonished at the gold.

"What nice counters," they said. And they began to give the gentleman things in kind and labour in exchange for the gold pieces.

The old Devil began to circulate his gold as he had done in the kingdom of Taras, and all sorts of things were brought to him, and all sorts of service rendered in exchange for the gold. The old Devil rejoiced, and he thought to himself: "My job is well in hand! I shall now ruin the fool as I did Taras, and buy him up body and soul."

As soon as the fools had got the gold pieces they divided them among the women for necklaces; all the girls plaited the coins in their hair, and all the children played with them in the street. All of them had such a lot that they didn't want any more. And the gentleman's big building was not half built yet, and he had not provided himself with corn and cattle for a single year yet. And the gentleman advertised for people to come and work for him and bring him corn and cattle, and he would give them gold pieces for everything they brought and every bit of work they did.

But nobody came to work, and nobody brought anything. Only now and then did a little boy or a little girl come running to exchange an egg for a gold piece; and at last nobody would bring him anything to eat at all. The honest gentleman grew hungry, and went into a village to buy himself some

The Story of Ivan the Fool

dinner. He poked his nose into one farm and offered a gold piece for a hen, but the woman of the farm would not take it. "I have got such a lot of them," she said. He next went to a poor landless man to buy a herring, and offered a gold piece for it. "I don't want it, my good man," said he; "I have no children who might like to play with it, and I have already three pieces which I am keeping as curiosities." Next he went to a muzhik for some bread. And the muzhik wouldn't take the money. "I don't want it," said he. "But wait a little, for Christ's sake, and I'll tell my old woman to cut you a slice." Then the Devil fell a-spitting, and ran away from the muzhik. He wouldn't take anything for Christ's sake, not he—the very sound of the word was worse than a knife to him.

So he did not get any bread. They had all stored it up. Wherever the old Devil might go nobody gave him anything for money, and they all said: "Bring something else, or come and work, or take this for Christ's sake." And the Devil had nothing at all but money. Work he could not, and it was impossible for him to take anything for Christ's sake. The old Devil grew very wroth. "What else do you want when I give you money?" said he. "You can buy everything for gold, and can hire every sort of working man." The fools, however, did not listen to him.

"No," said they, "we don't want it. They require no payments or taxes from us—what do we want with money?"

So the old Devil lay down to sleep without any supper.

More Tales from Tolstoi

The news of the affair came to the ears of Ivan the Fool. The people came to him and inquired, saying: "What are we to do? An honest gentleman has appeared among us, and he likes to eat and drink comfortably, and he likes to dress nicely, but he won't work, and he won't ask for anything in Christ's name, and he does nothing but give golden pieces to everyone. Formerly we gave him everything we could put our hands upon, and now we give no more. What are we to do with him? He may die of hunger."

Ivan listened to them attentively. "Well, I suppose we must feed him," said he. "Let him go about from house to house as the shepherds do."

So the old Devil had nothing for it but to go about from house to house.

At last it became the turn of Ivan's house to receive him. The old Devil came to dine, and Ivan's dumb wench was getting the dinner ready. The lazier ones used often to deceive her. Those who did not work used to come earliest to dinner and eat up all the pottage. And the dumb wench artfully tried to discover the loafers by their hands: whoever had hard and horny hands to him she gave a full fresh meal, and whoever had not hard hands to him she gave scraps. The old Devil crept behind the table, and the dumb wench seized him by the hand to see whether his hand was hard and horny, and his hands were clean and smooth and his nails were long. Then the dumb wench began to make a racket, and dragged the Devil away from the table.

And Ivan's wife said to him: "Don't howl, my

The Story of Ivan the Fool

pretty gentleman ; at our house my sister-in-law only lets those with horny hands sit down to table. Wait a bit till the others have eaten their fill, and then you can come and eat what they have left."

And the old Devil was offended because the King wanted him to feed with swine. And he said to Ivan: "Little fool that you are, you have a law in your kingdom that all people must work with their hands. This you have devised from sheer stupidity. Is it only with their hands that people work? Have you ever reflected with what intelligent people work?"

And Ivan said: "How should we fools get to know it? We always work with our hands and with our bent backs."

"That's because you are fools. But I," said he, "will teach you how to work with your head, and then you will know that it is far more profitable to work with your head than with your hands."

Ivan was astonished. "Indeed!" said he, "not in vain, then, are we called fools."

And the old Devil said: "Only it is not easy," said he, "to work with your head. You do not give me to eat simply because my hands are not horny, and yet you don't know that it is a hundred times more laborious to work with your head. Why, it makes your head ache like anything if you stick to it."

Ivan was astonished. "Why then torment yourself so, my dear friend?" said he. "Is it so light a matter to make your head ache so? Far better, surely, to do the little sort of work, with your hands and your bent back?"

More Tales from Tolstol

And the Devil said: "I bother my head about it because I am so sorry, for you, you fools. If I did not bother myself you would be fools all your life long. But I work a bit with my head, and I'll now teach you to do the same."

Ivan was astonished. "Teach away, then," said he, "and my hands will die a second time, as you are going to swap them for my head."

And the Devil promised to teach him.

And Ivan proclaimed through his kingdom that the nice, honest gentleman would come and teach everyone how to work with his head, and how to work out very much more with the head than with the hands, and they were all to come and be taught.

And a high watch-tower was erected in Ivan's kingdom, and a straight staircase leading up to it, and on the top of it was a belvedere. And Ivan took the gentleman up there that he might be seen by all.

So the gentleman went up into the watch-tower and began to speak from there. And the fools gathered together to look on. The fools thought that the gentleman was actually going to show them how to work with the head without the hands. But the old Devil only taught them with words how it was possible to go on living without working.

The fools understood not a word. They stared and stared, and they went about their business.

The old Devil stood all day on the watch-tower; he stood there all through the second day, and he talked the whole time. He would have very much liked something to eat, but the fools had no idea of

The Story of Ivan the Fool

this, so they brought no bread to him on the top of the watch-tower. They thought that if he could work so much better with his head than with his hands, it would be a mere trifle for him to earn himself some bread with his head. So the old Devil continued standing on the watch-tower all through the second day, talking all the time. And the people went to look at him, and when they had looked their fill they came away.

"Well!" asked Ivan, "has the gentleman begun to work with his head?"

"Not yet," they said; "he hasn't left off chattering yet."

The old Devil remained on the watch-tower for yet another day, and he began to get weak; he staggered once or twice, and knocked his head against a post. One of the fools saw this and told it to Ivan's wife, and Ivan's wife ran out to her husband into the field where he was ploughing.

"Come!" said she, "and look; they say that the gentleman has now begun to work with his head."

Ivan was astonished.

"Well, come," said he, and he turned the horse's head and went to the watch-tower. They came to the watch-tower, and by that time the old Devil was quite weak in the head, and began to totter and knock his head against the post again and again. Ivan had no sooner come to the place, than the Devil stumbled, fell, and came thundering down the staircase, knocking his head against every single step on his way down, as if he wanted to count them all.

"Well!" said Ivan, "the honest gentleman spoke the

More Tales from Tolstol

truth when he said that next time he would make his head ache. Why, horny hands are nothing to this ; work of this sort would pretty soon give one lumps on the head." And Ivan would have gone to see if much work had been done, when suddenly the ground opened and the old Devil plunged through the earth—only a hole remained.

Ivan scratched his head. "Ugh! the filthy creature! So it is he again, eh! Like children, like father—I'm well rid of him!"

And Ivan is living to this day, and all the people crowded into his kingdom, and his brothers came to him, and he fed them. Any who like may come and say: "Feed us!" "All right!" says Ivan, "live with us ; we have plenty of everything." There is only one settled custom in his kingdom: those who have horny hands sit at table, and those who have not must eat the scraps.

THE END.

